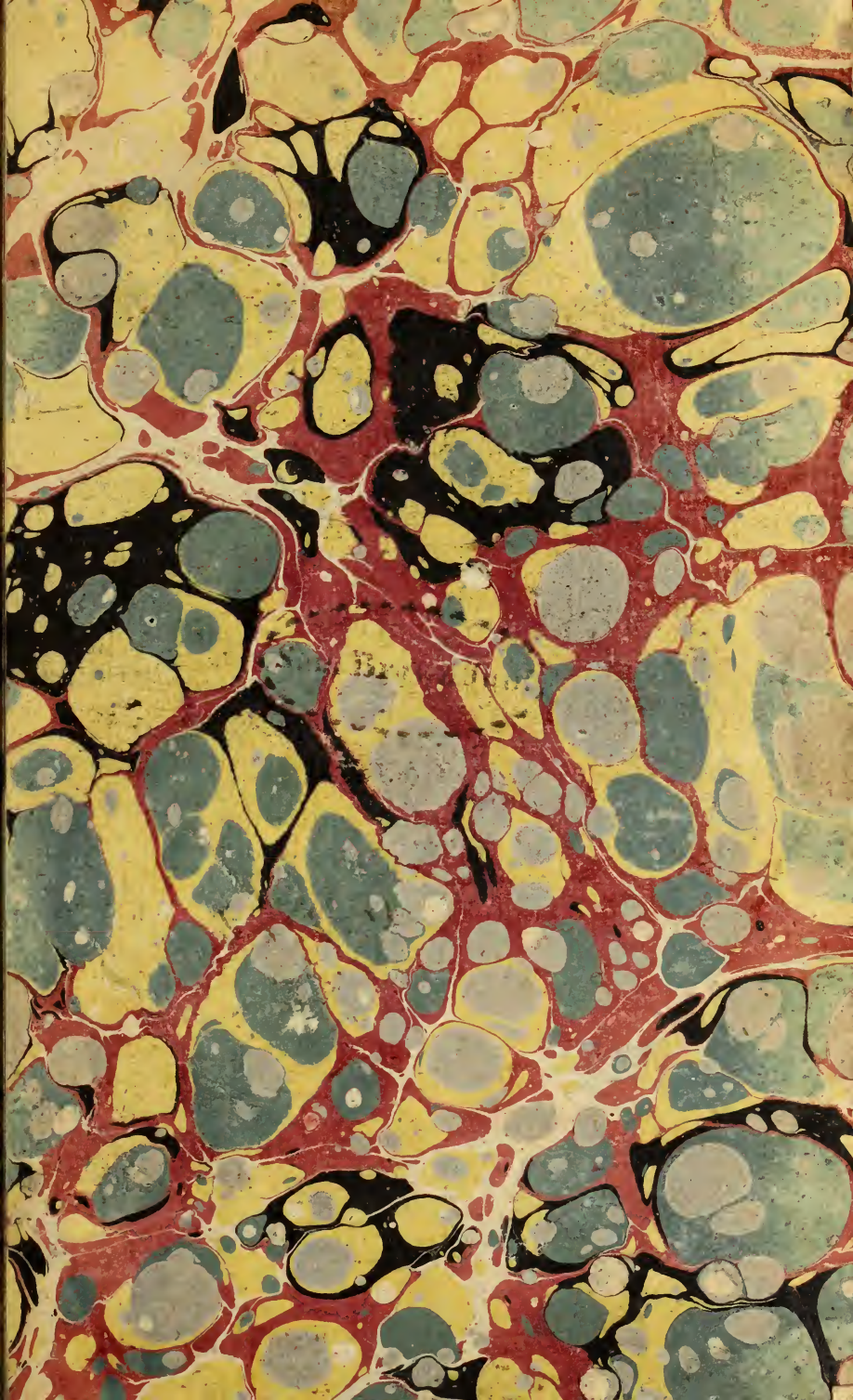

Jac: Brown
from his brother
E. Kirby.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. VI.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

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LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II. AND M. DE VOLTAIRE.

LETTER I.

From the King, while Prince Royal.

SIR, Berlin, August 8, 1736.

THOUGH I have not the pleasure of being personally known to you, I am not the less acquainted with you in your writings. They are, if I may be allowed the expression, treasures of mind, and pieces of workmanship laboured with so much taste, delicacy, and art, that their beauties appear new every time they are examined. I imagine I have discovered in them

the character of their ingenious author, who does honour to the age and to the human underſtanding. The great men among the moderns will one day be indebted to you, and to you only, ſhould the diſpute between the ancients and moderns ever be revived, for having inclined the ſcale in their favour.

To the quality of an excellent poet you add an infinity of additional knowledge, which it is true has ſome relation to poetry, but which has never been appropriated to it, except by yourſelf. Never before did poet impart cadence to metaphyſical reflections; this honour was reſerved for you. It was the taſte which you diſcover, in your writings, for philoſophy that induced me to ſend you the tranſlation I have cauſed to be made of the accuſation and juſtification of Wolf, the moſt celebrated philoſopher of our times; and who, for having introduced light into the dark abodes of metaphyſics, and for having treated ſubjects ſo abſtruſe in a manner equally dignified, preciſe, and clear, is cruelly accuſed of irreligion and atheiſm. Such is the deſtiny of great men; the ſuperiority of their genius continually expoſes them to the envenomed ſhafts of calumny and envy.

I am at preſent cauſing the treatiſe on God, on the ſoul, and on the world, which has fallen from

from the pen of the ſame author, to be tranſlated. I will ſend it to you, ſir, as ſoon as it ſhall be finiſhed; and I am certain that the force of his demonſtrations will ſtrike you through all his propoſitions, which he purſues geometrically, and connects them with each other, like links of the ſame chain.

The kindneſs with which you regard, and the ſupport you afford to, all thoſe who devote themſelves to arts and ſciences, lead me to hope that you will not exclude me from the number of the perſons whom you ſhall deem worthy of receiving your inſtructions; for I may juſtly call a correſpondence with you by letter inſtructive; it cannot but be profitable to any thinking being. I dare even affirm, without derogating from the merit of any one, there is not, in the whole world, an exception to be made in favour of any man of whom you are not worthy to be the maſter.

Without being prodigal of praiſe which would be unworthy of your acceptance, I may add, I find innumerable beauties in your works. Your Henriade charms me; it happily triumphs over the injudicious criticiſms by which it has been attacked. In the tragedy of Cæſar, we behold characters well ſupported. The ſentiments are all ſplendid and great; and we feel that Brutus is either Roman or Engliſh. Alzira to the grace

of novelty adds a happy contraſt between ſavage and European manners. You ſhew us, in the character of Guſman, that chriſtianity ill underſtood, and under the guidance of falſe zeal, renders man more barbarous and inhuman than paganiſmitſelf.

Corneille, the great Corneille, who attracted the admiration of his age, could he at preſent riſe from the dead, would behold with aſtoniſhment, and perhaps with envy, that the tragic muſe has laviſhed favours upon you which ſhe granted to him but ſparingly. What have we not to expect from the author of ſo many works of genius! What new miracles will not ſtart from the pen which ſo lately, ſo wittily, and ſo elegantly, has delineated the temple of taſte!

Theſe are the reaſons that induced me ardently to deſire the poſſeſſion of all your works. I entreat, ſir, you will ſend them, will communicate them to me, without reſerve. If among your manuſcripts there ſhould be any one which, from motives of neceſſary circumſpection, you think proper to conceal from the eyes of the public, I promiſe to preſerve it in the ſanctuary of ſecrecy, and to remain ſatisfied with beſtowing my ſingle unſocial applauſe. I know that unfortunately the faith of princes is a thing but little reſpected, in our days; but I neverthelefs hope

hope you will not ſuffer yourſelf to be prejudiced by general opinion, and that you will kindly conſider me as an exception to the rule.

I ſhall think myſelf more wealthy, by poſſeſſing your works, than I could be by the acquirement of all the tranſitory and deſpicable gifts of fortune, which the ſame chance that gives takes away. The firſt, I mean your works, we may, by the aid of memory, make our own, and while memory ſhould remain they would be ours. Knowing the little ſtrength of mine, I long heſitate before I can determine on the choice of thoſe ſubjects with which it ought to be ſtored.

Were poetry in the ſtate in which it formerly was, and did poets at preſent continue to write dull idyls, eclogues caſt in the ſame mould, and inſipid ſtanzas, or if at beſt they could only tune the lyre to elegy, I ſhould for ever renounce poetry. But you ennoble the art: you indicate new roads, and paths unknown to the * * * and the Rouſſeaus of the age.

There are qualities in your verſes which render them reſpectable, and worthy to be admired and ſtudied by all reſpectable people. They contain a courſe of morality, and by reading we are taught to think and to act; virtue is painted in them in colours the moſt beautiful; the idea of true glory is there determinate, preciſe; and

you insinuate a love of the sciences in so artful and so delicate a manner, that whoever has read your works is inspired with the ambition of following your traces. How often have I said to myself——"Leave, wretched man, a burthen "which thou art unable to bear! Voltaire can-"not be imitated, for Voltaire stands alone*!"

In moments like these, I have felt that the advantages of birth, and the fumes of grandeur which vanity so continually inspires, are of but little, or, to speak more truly, of no worth. They are distinctions foreign to ourselves, and which do but adorn the figure. How much more preferable are talents and understanding! How much are we indebted to the man, by nature distinguished, in whom they have taken birth! Nature delights in forming men whom she endows with all necessary capacity to make a progress in the arts and sciences; and it is for princes to reward their labours. Alas, why has not fame made me the instrument of bestowing the wreath due to your success? My only fear is that this country, but little fertile in lau-

* The French reads "Voltaire cannot be imitated unless by being Voltaire himself." The translator has taken the liberty of avoiding the old joke of the elephant, which was the largest in the whole world, except himself. T.

rels, will not afford ſufficient to reward your works.

If fate ſhould not favour me ſo far as to make you mine, I at leaſt may hope ſome day to ſee the man whom, at ſo great a diſtance, I have admired; and perſonally to aſſure you I am, with all the eſteem and reſpect due to thoſe who, following the torch of truth as their guide, conſecrate their labours to the public,

SIR,

Your affectionate friend,

FEDERIC*, P. R. of Pruſſia.

LETTER II.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Paris, Auguſt 26, 1736.

I SHOULD indeed be inſenſible were I not exceedingly affected by the letter with which your royal highneſs has deigned to honour me. My ſelf-love is there too highly flattered; but

* The editors of the edition of Baſil, and of the Letters of Count Suhm, inform us that the king of Pruſſia always ſigned himſelf *Federic*, becauſe the pronunciation was more ſoft than *Frederic*.

my love of the human race, which is ever in my heart, and which, I will venture to affirm, conſtitutes my character, has imparted a pleaſure a thouſand times more pure, when I perceived there was one prince in the world who thought like a man; a philoſophic prince born to render men happy.

Permit me to ſay, there is not a man on earth who is not indebted to the care with which you apply yourſelf to cultivate, by ſound philoſophy, a mind born to command. Be aſſured, there never have been any truly good kings, except ſuch who, like you, began by acquiring knowledge, by ſtudying man, by the love of truth, and by the deteſtation of perſecution and ſuperſtition. There is no monarch who, thinking thus, might not reſtore the golden age in his domains. How does it happen that ſo few kings ſeek this advantage? You are ſenſible of it, ſir: others think more of royalty than of humanity; you do exactly the reverſe. Be aſſured that if hereafter the tumult of affairs, and the wickedneſs of man, ſhall not alter a character ſo divine, you will be adored by your people, and revered by the whole earth. Philoſophers, worthy ſo to be called, will croud to your ſtates. Like as the moſt celebrated artiſts repair, in multitudes, to the countries where their art is

held

held in the moſt eſteem, ſo will thinking men ſurround your throne.

The illuſtrious queen Chriſtina quitted her kingdom to go in ſearch of the arts: only reign, ſir, and the arts will come in ſearch of you.

May you never be diſguſted with the ſciences becauſe of the quarrels of the ſcientific! You perceive, ſir, from the facts which you have deigned to inform me of, that the literati are men, in general, as much as courtiers are; they are ſometimes equally avaricious, intriguing, falſe and cruel; and the only difference, between the peſts of the court and the peſts of the ſchools, is that the latter are the moſt ridiculous.

It is a melancholy reflexion, for humanity, that thoſe who call themſelves the denouncers of the heavenly commands, the interpreters of the Deity, in a word, that the theologians, are ſometimes of all men the moſt dangerous; that they are as pernicious to ſociety as they are obſcure in their opinions; and that their minds are inflated with gall and pride, in proportion as they are deſtitute of truth. They wiſh to diſturb the world in defence of a ſophiſm, and to induce kings to revenge with fire and ſword the inſulted honour of an argument in *ferio*, or in *barbara*.

Every

Every thinking being who is not of their opinion is an atheiſt; and every king who does not favour them is to ſuffer damnation. You know, ſir, the beſt that can be done is to abandon theſe pretended preceptors, but real enemies, of the human race, to their own courſe. Their words when unnoticed evaporate in wind *; but ſhould the influence of authority interfere, the wind becomes a tempeſt which ſometimes overturns the throne.

With the joy of a heart full of love for the public good, I perceive, ſir, the immenſe diſtance which you place between thoſe men who peaceably ſeek the truth, and thoſe who are deſirous of warfare in defence of words, the meaning of which they do not underſtand. I perceive that men like Newton, Leibnitz, Bayle and Locke, thoſe elevated, enlightened and gentle ſpirits, afford you intellectual nutriment; and that you caſt away all other pretended aliments, which you find to be empoiſoned or unſubſtantial.

I cannot too much thank your royal highneſs for your goodneſs in ſending me the little book concerning Wolf: I deem his metaphyſical

* The French reads——*ſe perd en l'air comme du vent*—i. e. "Are loſt in *air* like the *wind*." The underſtanding of Voltaire himſelf was not ſufficiently copious to be always correct. T.

ideas

ideas to be ſuch as do honour to the human underſtanding: they are flaſhes of lightning, in the midſt of deep darkneſs, and this I believe is all that can be hoped from metaphyſics. There is little probability that firſt cauſes ſhould ever be well underſtood. The mice that inhabit ſome ſmall chinks, in a vaſt building, neither know whether the building be eternal, who is the architect, nor wherefore it has been built by that architect: they endeavour to preſerve life, to people their holes, and to fly the deſtructive animals by which they are purſued. Such mice are we; and the divine architect who has built the univerſe has never yet, to my knowledge, revealed his ſecret to any mouſe among us. If any one may more than another pretend to ſuch divination, it is M. Wolf. We may contend with, but we muſt eſteem him; for his philoſophy is far from being pernicious. What can be more noble, more true, than to ſay like him that men ought to be equitable, even though they ſhould have the misfortune to be atheiſts *?

The protection which it ſeems you afford, ſir, to this learned man, is a proof of the juſtneſs of

* There ſeems reaſon to ſuſpect ſome error of the preſs. The author probably ſaid, or meant to ſay —— "Juſtice ſhould be done to all men, even though they ſhould have the misfortune to be atheiſts." T.

your

your mind, and of the humanity of your ſentiments.

You have the goodneſs, ſir, to promiſe to ſend me the treatiſe on God, on the ſoul, and on the world.——What a preſent! How uncommon an intercourſe!——The heir of a throne, from the ſplendors of his palace, deigns to ſend a hermit his inſtructions! Grant me the promiſed preſent, ſir, of which I am only worthy from my extreme love for truth. Princes generally dread to hear the truth; but by you truth ſhall be taught.

With reſpect to poetry, of which you have ſpoken to me, you think with the ſame good ſenſe on this art as on all other ſubjects. Poetry which does not teach men ſome new and affecting truth does but little deſerve to be read. You are ſenſible nothing can be more contemptible than to paſs our lives in rhyming thoſe common place thoughts which do not merit the name of thought. If there be any thing ſtill more contemptible, it is that of being a ſatirical poet, of writing only to decry the writings of others. Such poets are to Parnaſſus what thoſe doctors are to the ſchools who underſtand nothing but words, and who cabal againſt ſuch as treat on realities.

If

If the Henriade has had the good fortune not to diſpleaſe your royal highneſs, I am indebted for this to the love of the true, and to the horror which my poem inſpires againſt the factious, the perſecutor, the ſuperſtitious, the tyrannical, and the rebellious. It is the work of an honeſt man, and ought to find favour in the preſence of a philoſophic prince.

You command me to ſend you my other works: I will obey, ſir; you ſhall be my judge, and to you I will appeal inſtead of to the public; to you I will ſubmit what I ventured to write on philoſophy, and your reflection ſhall be my reward; a reward which few ſovereigns have it in their power to beſtow. Of your ſecrecy I am certain; your virtues muſt equal your underſtanding.

I ſhall eſteem it a very ſingular happineſs perſonally to come and pay my reſpects to your royal highneſs. We travel to Rome to viſit churches, pictures, ruins, and baſſo-relievos. A prince like you, ſir, much better deſerves ſuch a journey; the rarity contains much more of the marvellous. But friendſhip will not permit me to leave the retreat in which it detains me. You, no doubt, think like Julian. This great man, who has been ſo much calumniated,

ſaid that friends ought ever to be preferred to kings.

In whatever corner of the world I ſhall end my days, be certain, ſir, my ſupplications will ever be offered up for you; that is to ſay, for the happineſs of a whole people. My heart will ever rank me among your ſubjects, and your glory will be ever dear to me. It is my wiſh that you may continually reſemble your preſent ſelf, and that other kings may reſemble you.

I am, with profound reſpect,
Your royal highneſs's
very humble, &c.

LETTER III.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rheinſberg, September 9, 1736*.

TO receive praiſes from a man of your merit is putting a ſcholar in philoſophy very

* The date in the Berlin edition is November 4, but the date of the Baſil edition in this inſtance (and many others) is confirmed by the anſwer of Voltaire. I ſhall, however, make it my duty to notice the variations as they occur; and ſhall ſpeak concerning theſe editions in ſome general remarks at the concluſion of the work, which it will be neceſſary to make. T.

ſeverely

ſeverely to the proof. Preſumption, and the love of ſelf, thoſe cruel tyrants of the ſoul, which poiſon it by flattery, imagine they have acquired the authority of a philoſopher, and, receiving arms from your hands, would uſurp an empire over my reaſon, which I have ever diſputed with them. Happy ſhall I be, if, by convincing them, and by the practice of philoſophy, I may one day equal the perhaps too advantageous idea which you have conceived of me.

You have drawn the portrait of an accompliſhed prince, ſir, in your letter, in which I cannot diſcover my own features. You have given me a leſſon, which you have clothed after the moſt ingenious and moſt obliging faſhion; in fine, you have employed artifice to introduce timid truth into the company of a prince. It is my intention to make this portrait a model, and I will employ every effort to render myſelf the worthy diſciple of a maſter who knows ſo divinely how to inſtruct.

I already feel myſelf infinitely indebted to your works, from which ſentiments and knowledge may be acquired worthy of the greateſt men. My vanity does not prompt me to ſuppoſe myſelf one of theſe; and, if I may be indulged in the ambition of hereafter becom-

ing

ing one, I ſhall be indebted for my ſucceſs, ſir, to you.

> Some traits of worth ſhould Europe think my due,
> Truth will proclaim, I owe them all to you.

I cannot forbear to admire that generous character, that love of the human race, by which you merit the applauſe of all nations, which I dare even affirm are more indebted to you than the Greeks were to their ſage legiſlators, Solon and Lycurgus, whoſe laws made their country flouriſh, and laid the foundation of a grandeur to which, without them, Greece never could have aſpired. Authors, in a certain ſenſe, are public men; their writings are every where ſpread, are known to the whole world, and manifeſt to the reader the ideas with which they are impreſſed. You publiſh your opinions; their beauty, the charms of diction and of eloquence, in a word, all that the ardour of thought and the power of elocution are capable of producing, enchant your readers; your affections are moved, and preſently, by the ſympathizing impulſe which you communicate, the whole earth breathes the ſame love of mankind. You form good citizens, faithful friends, and ſubjects who, abhorring rebellion, are zealous for the public welfare. How much are men indebted to you!

Though

Though all Europe ſhould not acknowledge a truth, which is not therefore the leſs a truth, though it ſhould not be inſpired with all that gratitude which is ſo juſtly your due, ſtill aſſure yourſelf of mine; and henceforth regard my actions as the fruits of your leſſons. I have received thoſe leſſons, my heart has been moved, and to practiſe them during life is what I have impoſed upon myſelf as an inviolable law.

I ſee with admiration, ſir, that your knowledge has not confined itſelf to the ſciences only, but that you have ſounded the utmoſt depths of the human heart, and that the ſalutary advice you give me, by deſiring me to be diffident of myſelf, originated there. For this I thank you, ſir, and wiſh to repeat it to myſelf inceſſantly.

It is one of the deplorable effects of human frailty that men are not always equal to themſelves; their reſolutions are often deſtroyed with the ſame promptitude with which they were formed. The Spaniards very judiciouſly ſay—ſuch a man *has been* brave. Might it not, with equal truth, be ſaid that great men are not always, nor wholly, great?

If there be one thing I more ardently deſire than all others, it is to be ſurrounded by able and learned men. I ſhall not think thoſe endeavours which I ſhall employ to attract them

to me loſt; it is but a homage due to their merit, and a confeſſion of the neceſſity we have of their inſtructions.

I cannot recover from my aſtoniſhment when I recollect that a nation, improved by the fine arts and aided by genius, a nation which ſo long has been in poſſeſſion of good taſte, ſhould remain ignorant of the treaſure ſhe herſelf poſſeſſes. What! And does that Voltaire to whom we erect altars and ſtatues, neglected by his country, live a hermit in the further part of the province of Champagne! This is a paradox; an enigma; one of the ſtrange effects of the caprice of men!

Do not fear, ſir, that ever I ſhould be diſguſted with learning, becauſe of the quarrels of the learned. I ſhall always know the proper diſtinction between the ſciences, themſelves, and thoſe by whom ſcience is degraded. Their diſputes generally originate either in exceſſive ambition, and the inſatiable avidity of acquiring fame, or in the envy inferior merit conceives at beholding the ſplendor of genius, and itſelf in the ſhade. Great men are liable to perſecution from the latter cauſe. Thus trees, the branches of which riſe to the clouds, are more expoſed to the injuries of weather, the ſtorm and the whirlwind, than the weak ſhrubs which grow beneath

and

and are ſheltered by their foliage. It was this which from the depths of hell raiſed up the calumnies incited againſt Deſcartes and Bayle. It is the ſuperiority of yourſelf and of Wolf which offends the ignorant, and induces thoſe to exclaim whoſe ridiculous preſumption would ruin every man, the underſtanding, learning, and knowledge of whom ſhould efface their own. But let us for a moment ſuppoſe that great men ſhould even forget themſelves ſo fa as to be angry with each other; ought we therefore to deny them the title of great, and deprive them of the eſteem which they have deſerved by their various eminent qualities? The public uſually does not pardon; it condemns the ſmalleſt faults; its judgment is fixed only on the preſent, and the paſt is eſtimated at nothing: but we ought not to imitate the public. I ſeek for learned and worthy men, and not for men who are free from error. When did nature form ſuch a model of virtue as to be exempt from all blame? I ſhould think myſelf happy, if the world would have the ſame indulgence for my defects as I have for the defects of others.

When ſtunned by the conteſt of the rhymers of Parnaſſus, I adviſe them to read the preface to Alzira; where, ſir, you have given them a

leſſon which they ought never to forget, and to which nothing can be added.

With reſpect to the theologians, it appears that they generally reſemble each other, be they of what nation or of what religion they may. Their deſign is to arrogate to themſelves a deſpotic power over the conſcience, and this is ſufficient to render them the zealous perſecutors of all thoſe who nobly dare to unveil truth. They are continually armed with anathematizing thunder, that they may, by their curſes, cruſh the imaginary phantom of irreligion, which they unremittingly combat. Yet liſten to them and they will preach humility, a virtue which they never yet have practiſed, and call themſelves the miniſters of the God of peace, whom they ſerve with hearts overflowing with hatred and ambition. Their conduct, which is ſo little conformable to their morality, would, in my opinion, be ſufficient to diſcredit their doctrine.

The character of truth is wholly different. She has no need of arms to defend herſelf, nor of violence to engage man to be of her faith. Let her but appear, and as ſoon as her luminous rays have diſperſed the clouds by which ſhe was concealed, her triumph is certain.

What I have ſaid, I imagine, contains ſome traits which ſufficiently characteriſe the clergy, and

and which, were they to read, would not induce them to choose us for their panegyrists. I know however enough of their defects to be in conscience obliged to render them that justice which is their due. Boileau, in his satire against women, had the equity to except three ladies of Paris, whose acknowledged virtue sheltered them from his darts. Following his example, I can cite two prelates, in the kingdom of Prussia, who love truth, who are philosophers, and whose integrity and candour well deserve that they should not be confounded with the multitude. This is a testimony which I owe to Messieurs de Beausobre and Reinbec; men who equally merit the epithet of celebrated.

The vulgar crowd, among the clergy, certainly are unworthy that we should descend so far as to inform ourselves of the dissensions by which they are agitated. I willingly leave such men the freedom of teaching and believing whatever can procure themselves some satisfaction; and the more willingly because my character is not violent. But this same character, which renders me the defender of freedom, equally induces me to hate persecution. I cannot be an idle spectator of innocence oppressed. To suffer this would be timidity and cowardice.

I never ſhould ſo warmly have embraced the cauſe of M. Wolf, had I not ſeen men who call themſelves reaſonable exhauſt their bitterneſs, and gall, againſt a philoſopher who has dared to think freely; and had I not ſeen theſe men carry their blind fury ſo far as to hate, without being able to give any other reaſon for their hatred than what aroſe from a difference of opinion; at the very moment too that they would be laviſh in their praiſe of a raſcal, a perfidious, or a hypocritical wretch, who poſſeſſed no other advantage than that of thinking as they did.

I am delighted, ſir, to ſee the glorious teſtimony which you beſtow on four of the greateſt philoſophers Europe has produced. Their works are treaſures of truth and error. The diverſity of their ſentiments teaches us how much the imagination is ſubject to ſtray, and how narrow are the limits of the human underſtanding. If Newton, Leibnitz, and Locke, men of ſuch ſuperior genius, and accuſtomed during their whole lives to think, were unable entirely to throw off the yoke of prejudice, that they might obtain certainty and knowledge, what can be expected from a ſchool-boy in philoſophy, like me?

M. Wolf muſt be highly flattered by the approbation with which you honour his metaphyſics,

phyſics, and which in reality he merits. It is one of the moſt finiſhed works of the kind that has ever been written, and there is a pleaſure in ſubmitting it to the judgment of one whom neither its beauties nor its weak partscan eſcape.

I am ſorry that I am unable to accompany this letter with the tranſlation, which I have promiſed you, of his metaphyſics. You know, ſir, theſe kind of works are ſlow in execution. However I have ordered the part which is finiſhed to be copied, and I hope to ſend it by the next letter you ſhall receive from me.

I ſend with this the logic of M. Wolf, tranſlated by M. Deſchamps, a young man poſſeſſed of good natural abilities, and who has had the advantage to be a diſciple of the author, which made the tranſlation a work of much greater eaſe. It appears to me that he has been rather ſucceſsful: I only wiſh that, for his own ſake, he had corrected and abridged the dedication, in which he has been very prodigal of praiſe to me, and which would have been infinitely more in character, had it been inſerted in an opera prologue, addreſſed to Louis XIV.

I do not declare myſelf in favour of the Henriade alone, which is the only epic poem the French poſſeſs, but of all your works; they generally bear the ſtamp of immortality.

Such equal elevation, ſupported through ſo many different ſubjects, can only be the effect of a very uncommon mind, and a univerſal genius. Permit me, ſir, to ſay you are the only perſon capable of uniting the deep meditations of the philoſopher, the talents of the hiſtorian, and the vivid imagination of the poet.

You have given me a very ſenſible pleaſure by the promiſe you have made of ſending me all your works. The infinite eſteem in which I hold them is my only merit. Emperors and monarchs may beſtow wealth, even kingdoms, and all which can flatter the pride of avarice and the cupidity of men; but theſe are external things; and inſtead of rendering them more enlightened or more virtuous, they uſually ſerve but to corrupt. The preſent you have promiſed me, ſir, is of a very different nature. By reading what you write, our manners may be corrected, and our minds adorned.

Far from having the ſilly preſumption of erecting myſelf the arbiter of your labours, I ſhall be ſatisfied with admiring. The end I propoſe to myſelf is inſtruction. Like the bee, I wiſh to gather honey from the flowers, and ſhall leave to the ſpider the trouble of extracting the poiſon.

It

It is not for a voice ſo feeble as mine to add to your renown, which already is ſpread ſo far; but the world will at leaſt be obliged to own that the deſcendants of the ancient Goths and Vandals, the inhabitants of the foreſts of Germany, know how to render juſtice to reſplendent merit, and to the virtues and the talents of the great men of all nations.

I know, ſir, the vexation to which I might expoſe you, were I to be guilty of indiſcretion, relative to the works you may ſend me in manuſcript. Let me intreat you to confide in me, and in my promiſe: my fidelity is inviolable.

I too much reſpect the ties of friendſhip to wiſh to tear you from the arms of Emily: mine muſt be a hard and inſenſible heart, were I to propoſe a ſacrifice like this; neither could he ever have known from experience the delight there is in being with the perſon we love, who ſhould not feel the pain which ſuch a ſeparation muſt give you. All I requeſt of you is to pay homage, in my behalf, to that aſtoniſhing prodigy of genius and knowledge. Such women are indeed uncommon.

Be perſuaded, ſir, that I know the value of your eſteem; but that I alſo recollect the leſſon which the Henriade gives,

"How

"How dangerous 'tis t' acquire too early fame."

It is a burthen under the weight of which moſt people ſink.

There is no kind of happineſs which I do not wiſh you, nor any of which you are not worthy. Cirey ſhall hereafter be my Delphos, and your correſpondence, which I entreat you to continue, my oracle.

I am, ſir, with very ſingular eſteem,

Your affectionate friend, &c.

LETTER IV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, November, 1736.

I SHED tears of joy at reading your letter of the 9th of September, which your royal highneſs did me the honour to addreſs to me, and in which I diſcovered a prince who certainly will gain the love of all mankind. I am every way aſtoniſhed. You ſpeak like Trajan, you write like Pliny, and your French is that of our beſt authors. How vaſt is the difference between

men! Louis XIV. was a great king, and I respect his memory; but he did not speak with your humanity, nor did he express himself in your language. I have seen some of his letters, and he did not know the orthography of his mother tongue. Berlin, under your auspices, shall become the Athens of Germany, and perhaps of Europe. I here reside in a city where two private persons, M. Boerhaave, and M. s'Gravesende, attract a company of between four and five hundred foreigners. Greater numbers will flock round a prince like you; and I confess I think I might be deemed very unfortunate * were I to die before I had seen the model of princes and the wonder of Germany. I do not wish to flatter you, sir; it would be criminal; it would be to breathe poison upon a flower. Of this I am incapable. It is my affections, my heart, that speak to your royal highness.

I have read the logic of M. Wolf, which you have been pleased to send me, and will venture to say it is impossible he should be a bad writer

* The French reads—*Je me tiendrais bien malheureux si je mourais avant d'avoir*, &c. Which is tantamount to he should grieve when he was dead. I should not write such notes as this, had not experience taught me it is necessary a translator should ask pardon, not only for committing blunders himself, but, for correcting those his author may happen to commit. T.

whose

whoſe ideas are ſo clear and ſo orderly. I am no longer aſtoniſhed that ſuch a prince ſhould love ſuch a philoſopher; they were formed for each other. Can your royal highneſs, who reads his works, aſk for mine? The poſſeſſor of a diamond mine requeſts a bead of glaſs: but you command and I obey.

I found, on arriving at Amſterdam, that an edition of my feeble performances had been begun, and I ſhall do myſelf the honour to ſend you the firſt copy. In the mean time, I ſhall venture to remit your royal highneſs a manuſcript, which I durſt never ſhew to a mind more under the power of prejudice, or leſs philoſophic and indulgent than yours; or to any but a prince, who, with every other homage, merits that alſo of unbounded confidence. A little time is neceſſary to reviſe and tranſcribe it; and I ſhall then ſend it, according to the mode you ſhall pleaſe to point out, and ſhall exclaim,

Parve, ſed invideo, ſine me, liber, ibis ad illum.

Indiſpenſable occupations, and circumſtances of which I am not the maſter, prevent me from ſpeeding in perſon to lay that homage at your feet

feet which I ſo juſtly owe you. The time may come when I ſhall be more fortunate.

Your royal highneſs apparently delights in every ſpecies of literature. A great prince is careful of every branch of government: a great genius loves every kind of ſtudy. Within my ſmall circle, I could only diſtantly pay my reſpects to the boundaries of each ſcience. A little of metaphyſics, a little of hiſtory, ſome little of philoſophy, and a few verſes, have divided my time. Feeble in each kind, I can but offer you what I have.

If you ſhall pleaſe, ſir, to amuſe yourſelf with ſome verſes, till the arrival of philoſophy, *carmina poſſumus donare.* I underſtand that M. Thiriot has the honour to execute ſome commiſſions for your royal highneſs at Paris; I hope, ſir, he acts to your ſatisfaction. If you have any commands for Amſterdam, I ſhall be exceedingly flattered by being your Thiriot of Holland. Happy he who can ſerve you, and more happy he who can approach your perſon.

Did I not intereſt myſelf in the happineſs of mankind, I ſhould be chagrined to recollect that you are deſtined to be a king; I ſhould wiſh you to be a private perſon, and that my affections might, with freedom, approach yours; but

but it is requiſite my wiſhes ſhould cede to the public good.

Indulge me, ſir, by ſuffering me to revere, in your perſon, the man more than the prince; and, of all the greatneſs that awaits you, permit the greatneſs of your mind to be the firſt to attract reſpect from me. Permit me alſo once more to repeat the admiration, and the hope, with which you inſpire me.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rheinſberg, November 7, 1736.

I AM exceedingly ſenſible of the honour you have done me, by placing my name at the beginning of the excellent work which you have ſent me *. The thoughts it contains, and the manner in which they are turned, are ſo favourable to me that I am obliged to confeſs it

* Epiſtle to the prince royal of Pruſſia, prefixed by Voltaire to his volume of Epiſtles.

is

is impoſſible to confide the care of our fame into better hands than yours. The duties of a wiſe and enlightened king, the code of the pope and the ſeven cardinals, and the picture you give of the pedantic erudition of James I. of England, certainly are maſter ſtrokes. Without ſtaying to analyſe the remainder of the epiſtle, which certainly is one of the moſt finiſhed I have ever yet ſeen, I return you my very ſincere thanks, and am happy to have occaſioned it.

I ſhould wiſh, ſir, to be able to teſtify my gratitude by an epiſtle in verſe, worthy to be addreſſed to you; but, as the ſtars hide themſelves in the preſence of the ſun, the gleaming rays of which efface and tarniſh their feeble light, ſo do I impoſe ſilence on my unſkilful lyre, diſowned by the muſes, when I am to write to you.

I know that your works are above all price; they contain in themſelves their own reward, immortality. Yet I hope you will accept as a mark of remembrance from me, the buſt of Socrates *, which I ſend you becauſe he was the greateſt man of Greece and the maſter who formed Alcibiades. Subtracting all with which he was

* This buſt was in gold, and worked for the head of a cane.

blackened

blackened by detraction, I might draw a parallel between yourself and Socrates; but, fearing to wound your modesty should I say the third part of what I think on this subject, I shall satisfy myself with employing all those who may serve as my interpreters to relate to you the sentiments of esteem and admiration, with which I shall ever remain,

Sir, &c.

LETTER VI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rheinsberg, November, 13th, 1736.

IT is not rank, Voltaire, nor power, nor birth,
Chimeras vain, can dignify the man.
Poor vulgar errors these. 'Tis wisdom, mind,
'Tis genius. He alone is truly great
Who can, and dares, neglected truth discern,
Spurning at splendid falsehood and the fool,
Who, pompous titles bearing by descent,
Thence arrogates that fame his fathers won,
But to their high born virtues ne'er aspires.

'Tis

'Tis his to ſeek renown in other paths,
Illuſtrious in himſelf, and ſelf dependent,
Who, feeling nature's gifts, neglects them not,
But poliſhes the diamond ſhe beſtows,
Which elſe might ne'er emit one ſplendid ray.

Whoe'er himſelf ennobles noble is,
And forces praiſe in calumny's deſpite.

Proud Rome ſtill boaſts her ſweet Correlli's lyre,
Nay France the trills of antique Lully chants.
" Of haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,"
By immortal Maro ſung, who has not heard?
Who knows not Titian, Reubens, Bonnarotti,
Carracio famed, or he whoſe deep reſearch *,
Abſtruſe in calculations infinite,
The vaunted Syracuſan might inſtruct?
What ſavage region would not bow before
Caſſini the profound? Or who can view
And not admire the man that plann'd thy proud
Façade, old Louvre †? Thou, oh Britain, haſt
Thy Newton! Demi God! Thou, France, haſt ſeen

* Algarotti.

† Bernini.—It is neceſſary to remark, that the deſigns of Claude Perrault for this beautiful façade were preferred to thoſe of Bernini, which were rejected. T. See Nouv. Dic. Portatif, Mot Bernini. Amſterdam, 8vo. 1769.

Thy Henry and thy Colbert, both THE GREAT!
And now art bless'd with thy Voltaire, whose name,
Unblushing, ranks with hero, king, or sage.

You know, sir, without doubt, that the amiable vivacity of the French is not the prevailing character of our nation. But, in revenge, candour and truth in our discourse are attributed to us. This will be sufficient to make you feel that a rhymer, in the remote parts of Germany, is ill adapted to produce impromptus; neither indeed have the verses I send you that merit.

I have long been in suspence whether I ought or ought not to send my verses to you, the Apollo of the French Parnassus; to you, with whom poets like Corneille and Racine cannot preserve their rank. I have been determined by two motives; one, which certainly would have dissuaded any other person, is, sir, that you are yourself a poet, and that consequently you must be acquainted with the insurmountable desire, the phrenzy, which impels us to produce our first essays; the other, which most strengthened me in my purpose, is the pleasure I take in letting you understand my sentiments

ſentiments in favour of poetry; and theſe would not have had the ſame grace in proſe.

The greateſt merit theſe verſes contain is certainly that of being embelliſhed by your name. I am not ſo blinded by ſelf-love as to imagine this epiſtle exempt from errors. I do not even think it worthy of being addreſſed to you. I have read your works, ſir, and thoſe of the moſt celebrated authors, and can aſſure you I know the infinite difference there is between their poetry and mine.

I abandon what I have written to you; criticiſe, condemn, diſapprove, on condition that you will but pardon the two concluding lines. I am warmly intereſted in their behalf; the thought they contain is ſo true, ſo evident, ſo manifeſt, that I perceive myſelf able to defend ſuch a cauſe againſt the moſt rigid criticiſm, in oppoſition to hatred and envy, and in deſpite of detraction.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rheinſberg, December 3d, 1736 *.

I Have to-day been agreeably ſurpriſed by the receipt of your letter, and the pieces with which you have been pleaſed to accompany it. There is not any thing in the world could have given me greater pleaſure, for there are no works I read with ſo much avidity as yours. I only wiſh that the ſovereignty which you grant me, in quality of a thinking being, could enable me to return you real marks of the eſteem I have for you, and which it is impoſſible to avoid having.

I have read the diſſertation on the ſoul which you have addreſſed to father Tournemine †. Every rational man who cannot believe what he cannot comprehend, and who does not raſhly decide on ſubjects which our feeble reaſon will not ſuffer us properly to examine, muſt always be of your opinion. Certain it is we ne-

* The date in the Berlin edition is December 14th, 1737.

† This diſſertation is printed in the *Melanges Litteraires*, Tome III. page 45.

ver

ver can arrive at the knowledge of firſt cauſes. How can we, who are unable to underſtand whence it happens that two ſtones ſtruck one againſt the other emit fire, ſtand forth and affirm it is impoſſible God ſhould unite matter and mind? Of one thing I am certain, which is that I am material, and that I think. This argument proves to me the truth of your propoſition.

The only knowledge I have of father Tournemine is the unworthy manner in which he has attacked M. Beauſobre, on his Hiſtory on Mechaniſm. With him invective is the ſubſtitute of reaſon, a feeble and a rude reſource, which well proves he had nothing better to ſay.

With reſpect to my ſoul, I can aſſure you, ſir, it is very much the humble ſervant of yours, and ardently wiſhes it was diſengaged from matter that it might take flight and gain inſtruction at Cirey;

To that fam'd place at which this ſoul reveres
Emilia's love, the charms of Voltaire's wit;
Where Heaven, of favours prodigal, has ſent
What grandeur of itſelf could ne'er beſtow.
I have but rank; gifts more divine are yours,
Theſe cheriſh, and remember all your bliſs.

I ſhall not ſay all I think to you, ſir, of the pieces you have ſent me. The ode, which abounds in beauties, contains nothing but very evident truths; the epiſtle to Emily is a wonderful abridgment of the Newtonian ſyſtem; and the Mundane, a charming piece which breathes nothing but gaiety, is, if I may venture ſo to expreſs myſelf, a true courſe of ethics. The enjoyment of pure pleaſure is the greateſt reality the world of man contains. I well comprehend the pleaſure of which Montagne ſpeaks, and which never is degraded by any exceſs or debauch.

I expect the Newtonian philoſophy with great impatience, for which I ſhall be under infinite obligations to you. I well perceive I ſhall never have any other preceptor than M. de Voltaire. You inſtruct me in verſe, you inſtruct me in proſe; it muſt be a moſt untractable heart that ſhould not be rendered docile by your leſſons. I alſo wait for the Maid of Orleans. I hope ſhe will not be more auſtere than ſo many other heroines have been, who have ſuffered themſelves to be overcome by the prayers and perſeverance of their lovers.

I have received two packets from you, the preſent, ſir, is the third; I have ſent anſwers to the two firſt. I afterward addreſſed ſome verſes

to

to you, and this is my fourth letter; an anſwer to which I wait. The reaſon of theſe delays, in part, is occaſioned by the ſlowneſs of the poſts of Germany; beſide that my letters make a great circuit, as they paſs through Paris to arrive at Champagne. If you know any ſhorter road I beg you will inform me; I ſhould be happy to take the ſhorteſt. The indolence of the tranſcriber is the reaſon why I have not yet ſent you the Wolfian philoſophy; but, it ſhall indubitably ſoon be finiſhed.

You are too much above praiſe for me to beſtow it; but, at the ſame time, too much the friend of truth to be offended when you hear it. Permit me, therefore, ſir, to reiterate all the eſteem I have for you. My praiſes ſhall be confined to ſaying that I know you. Oh! that all the earth knew you as well! And, oh that I may one day behold him whoſe wit is the delight of my life!

I am, with true reſpect,

SIR,

Your very affectionate friend.

LETTER VIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Berlin, December, 1736.

I OWN I felt a ſecret joy at hearing you were in Holland, and at thus obtaining an eaſier mode to hear from you; though I fear, from the manner in which you indicate your being there, that there is ſome vexatious reaſon which has obliged you to quit France, and live incognito. Be aſſured, ſir, the ſecret ſhall not tranſpire by any indiſcretion of mine.

France and England are the only two kingdoms in which the arts are held in reſpect, and thither other nations ought to go for inſtruction. Thoſe who cannot repair to them in perſon may, at leaſt, extract knowledge and information from the writings of their celebrated authors. Their languages conſequently will merit to be ſtudied by foreigners, and particularly the French, which, according to me, has peculiar grace, in its elegance, its art, and the energy of its phraſes. Theſe were ſufficient motives to induce me to apply myſelf to that language, and I find myſelf

ſelf richly rewarded for my trouble, by the approbation which you, with ſo much indulgence, grant me.

Louis XIV. was, in a multitude of reſpects, a great prince. A ſoleciſm, or an error of orthography, could in no degree tarniſh the ſplendor of his fame, eſtabliſhed by the numerous actions by which he has been immortalized. He might with propriety, in every ſenſe, ſay *Cæſar eſt ſupra grammaticam.* But there are individual inſtances which are not generally applicable, and this is one of the number. That which was an imperceptible defect in Louis XIV. would become unpardonable negligence in any other king.

I am not great in any thing; my own application alone can render me, at ſome future time, ſerviceable to my country: and this is the only renown of which I am ambitious. The arts and ſciences have ever been the children of proſperity; the countries in which they have flouriſhed have had inconteſtable advantages over thoſe which nouriſh barbariſm in obſcurity. But, excluſive of the felicity to which the ſciences contribute, I ſhould think myſelf exceedingly happy to be able to introduce them into our diſtant climates, where hitherto they have made but ſmall progreſs. Like connoiſſeurs in painting,

ing, who can judge of pictures, and are acquainted with the great maſters, but who never had knowledge enough to mix up colours, I am ſtruck by and eſteem whatever is beautiful, but am not the leſs ignorant. I ſeriouſly fear, ſir, leſt you ſhould conceive an opinion of me too highly to my advantage. A poet willingly yields to the fire of his fancy, and it might eaſily happen that you might form a phantom, to whom you might attribute a thouſand qualities, which never had any exiſtence, except in the fertility of your own imagination.

You have, no doubt, read Alaric, a poem; by M. de Scuderi, which, if I do not miſtake, begins with the following line:

*Je chante le vainqueur des vainqueurs de la terre.**

This was certainly every thing that could have been ſaid; but unfortunately the poet ſtopped there, and the grand idea which the reader had formed of his hero diminiſhes at every page. I am very apprehenſive of being in the ſame predicament; and I will own to you, ſir, of all rivers I prefer thoſe infinitely the moſt which, gliding ſilently from their ſources, increaſe in their courſe, at the end of which their big waves

* The conqu'ror of earth's conquerors I ſing.

roll

roll ſimilar to thoſe of the ſea into which they pour their waters.

At length I perform my promiſe, and take this opportunity of ſending you a part of the metaphyſics of Wolf; the remainder ſhall ſoon follow. A friend whom I love and eſteem has, out of friendſhip for me, undertaken the tranſlation, which is very exact and faithful. He would have corrected the ſtyle if indiſpenſable buſineſs had not torn him from me. I have taken care to mark the principal paſſages. I flatter myſelf the work will meet your approbation: it cannot but be pleaſing to a mind ſo correct.

The propoſition of the *ſimple being*, which is a kind of atom, or the monad of which Leibnitz ſpeaks, will perhaps appear to you a little obſcure. In order the better to underſtand it, attention muſt previouſly be paid to the definitions of the author, concerning ſpace, extent, limitation and figure.

The great order which is obſerved, and that intimate connection which unites all the propoſitions with each other, are, in my opinion, the moſt admirable parts of the book. The manner in which the author reaſons is applicable to every kind of ſubject. It may be of great ſervice to the politician, who ſhall know how to

uſe

uſe it properly. I even dare venture to affirm, it is adapted to every ſubject which occurs in private life.

Far from blinding me to the beautiful, I have been furniſhed with ſtill more powerful motives for granting it my approbation, by reading the labours of M. Wolf.

I wait with equal impatience for your works in verſe and proſe. The gratitude which I already owe you, ſir, you continue greatly to increaſe. You may beſtow your productions on more enlightened perſons, but never on any by whom they will be more eſteemed. The fame you have acquired is above praiſe, but the admiration I feel will not ſuffer me to be ſilent. I perceive ſo much modeſty in the manner in which you ſpeak of your own works, that I fear leſt I ſhould ſhock it, by uttering only a part of the truth.

I confeſs I have a great deſire to ſee and be acquainted with you, ſir, as the moſt accompliſhed perſon which the age and France have produced. Philoſophy however teaches me to curb my wiſhes. The conſideration of your health, informed as I am that your conſtitution is delicate, and your private affairs, added to another motive which you may have not to travel into theſe parts, are ſufficient reaſons with me not to preſs

you

you on the ſubject. I love my friends with diſintereſted friendſhip, and ſhould, on all occaſions, prefer their intereſt to my own ſatisfaction. I am contented to remember you leave me to hope I ſhall meet you ſome time in my life. I will enjoy your correſpondence in lieu of your preſence; and this correſpondence, I hope, may now be carried on with greater facility, from the greater convenience of writing by the poſt. When you write, in anſwer to this, be pleaſed to addreſs your letter to M. von Borck, colonel in the Pruſſian ſervice at Weſel.

Let me intreat you, ſir, to inform me when you intend to quit Holland to go to England. In this caſe you may remit your letters to our Envoy Borck. I ſuffer much at ſeeing a man of your merit a victim to the malignity of mankind. The diſtance at which I am ought to induce you to regard my ſuffrage as the ſuffrage of poſterity. How trifling, how melancholy, is this conſolation! Yet ſuch has been that of all the great men, your predeceſſors, who have ſuffered that hatred which the mean and the envious ever bear to ſuperior genius. Ill-informed people eaſily are ſeduced by the malice of the wicked; like thoſe hounds, which continually follow the leader of the pack, bark when they hear him

bark, and when he is thrown out with him are off their ſcent.

Whoever is enlightened by truth rids himſelf of human prejudices, diſcovers and deteſts them, and unmaſks and abhors detraction. Be aſſured, ſir, that theſe conſiderations will always induce me to do you juſtice. I ſhall continually believe you are ſtill yourſelf, and warmly intereſt myſelf in whatever relates to you. Holland, a country which never diſpleaſed me, will become my holy land while you reſide there; my good wiſhes will attend you every where, and the eſteem I have for you, being founded on your merit, never can ceaſe, till it ſhall pleaſe the Creator to put an end to my exiſtence. Such are the ſentiments with which I am,

SIR,

Your entirely affectionate friend.

I have addreſſed three letters and a parcel for you to Thiriot, for which I beg you to ſend.

LET-

LETTER IX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Leyden, January, 1737.

WERE I unhappy I ſoon ſhould find conſolation. I am informed that your royal highneſs has deigned to ſend me your picture. Next to the honour of enjoying the ſight of you, this of all things is to me the moſt flattering. But how has the painter, by pourtraying your features, been able to expreſs the exalted features of the mind to which I render homage? I am informed that M. Chambrier has been to the poſt-office and taken the picture, but that the marchioneſs du Châtelet (Emily) immediately wrote to let him know this treaſure was deſtined for Cirey. She claims it, ſir, for ſhe partakes of the admiration with which I contemplate your royal highneſs. She will not ſuffer a pledge ſo precious to be carried off, and one that will conſtitute the chief ornament of the charming houſe ſhe has built in her deſert. There the ſhort inſcription will be read—*Vultus Auguſti, mens Trajani.*

According to appearances, ſir, the rumour of the preſent with which I have been honoured by you has made it ſuppoſed I am in Pruſſia. So all the newſpapers affirm. It is afflicting to me that, having ſo well divined my inclinations, they are ſo ill acquainted with my route. You cannot doubt, ſir, of the extreme deſire I have to admire you at a diſtance leſs great; but I have already informed you of the indiſpenſable occupation which detains me here. It is to render myſelf more worthy of your bounties that I am now at Leyden, and to acquire further knowledge of ſubjects in which you moſt delight. You love nothing but truth; of this I am at preſent in ſearch. I ſhall take the liberty to ſend your royal highneſs the ſmall ſtore which I may gather, and you will at a glance diſcover the good fruit from the bad.

In the mean time, if your royal highneſs ſhall pleaſe to amuſe yourſelf by a ſhort continuation of the Mundane, this I ſhall very ſoon have the honour to ſend you. It is a trifling eſſay of mundane morality, in which I endeavour, with ſome gaiety, to prove that luxury, magnificence, the arts, and all which conſtitute the ſplendor of a kingdom, conſtitute its wealth; and that thoſe who exclaim againſt what they call luxury ſeldom are any other than the ill-humoured poor.

I think

I think it poſſible to enrich a kingdom by affording many pleaſures to its inhabitants. If this be an error, it has hitherto appeared to me a very agreeable one. But I ſhall wait the opinion of your royal highneſs, to know how I ought to think. It is only from pure humanity that I counſel the purſuit of pleaſure. My pleaſures are little elſe than ſtudy and ſolitude. But there are a thouſand ways to be happy, in every one of which you merit ſo to be, and that ſo you ſhould be is my continual wiſh.

LETTER X.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January, 1737.

NO, ſir, it was not my portrait that I ſent you; ſuch an idea never entered my mind. My portrait has neither ſufficient beauty nor is it ſufficiently rare to be ſent to you. The ſuppoſition has originated in miſtake. I ſent you a trifle, ſir, as a mark of my eſteem; a buſt of Socrates, worked on the head of a cane; and the manner in which the cane was packed up, which was the ſame in which the canvaſs of pictures is rolled, gave riſe to error. The buſt was in every reſpect more worthy of being ſent to

you than my portrait. It is the image of the greateſt man of all antiquity, a man who is the glory of the heathen world, and has hitherto been an object of jealouſy and envy to Chriſtians. Socrates was perſecuted by detraction; and where is the great man who is not? His mind, in love with truth, revives in you. You alone merit to preſerve the buſt of that celebrated philoſopher. I hope, ſir, you will be kind enough to ſend for it, with ſome letters which I have written to you, and which I imagine may be remitted at the ſame time.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet does me great honour, to appear to intereſt herſelf in behalf of my ſuppoſed portrait. She is in danger of giving me a better opinion of myſelf than I ever had before, or than I ever ought to have. I have more reaſon to wiſh for her portrait. But I own to you that the charms of her mind have occaſioned me to forget her form. You will perhaps ſay this is to think too much like a philoſopher for a man of my age; but you may be deceived. The diſtance of the object, and the impoſſibility of poſſeſſion, may have as much to do in the affair as philoſophy, which ought not to render us inſenſible, nor to prevent us having affectionate hearts; for philoſophy would then bring more evil than good upon mankind.

It ſhould ſeem, in effect, ſome familiar demon has been converſing with all the news writers of Holland, that they ſhould thus unanimouſly affirm you have been on a viſit to me. I was firſt informed of this by the public papers, which made me begin to doubt of the reality of the fact. I immediately ſaid to myſelf you would not employ news writers to announce your journey; and, had it happened that you had meant to do me the pleaſure to come here, I ſhould have received more certain information. The public believes me more fortunate than I am, and I waſte my breath in endeavouring to undeceive the public. However, I am highly obliged to the news writer for having accompliſhed that, in idea, which he has very truly imagined might, in reality, be infinitely agreeable to me.

Although you have no manner of need to increaſe your knowledge by ſtudying the ſciences anew, I imagine that the converſation of the famous s'Graveſande may be very agreeable to you. He muſt be in poſſeſſion of the Newtonian philoſophy in its laſt ſtate of perfection. Nor will the phyſician Boerhaave be leſs uſeful to you, if you ſhould conſult him on the ſtate of your health, which I recommend you, ſir, to do. Naturally inclined to preſerve your body, let me intreat you to increaſe thoſe atten-

tions you already pay to your health for the love of a friend who warmly intereſts himſelf in whatever relates to you. I dare venture to inform you I know your worth, and the greatneſs of the loſs which the world would ſuſtain by loſing you. The regret which might be paid to your memory would to you be uſeleſs, and even ſuperfluous in thoſe by whom it might be felt. I foreſee and I dread the misfortune, but I wiſh it to be a diſtant one.

You will give me great pleaſure, ſir, by ſending me your new productions, of which I am very impatiently in expectation. The good tree always brings forth good fruit. Your Henriade and your other immortal works are the pledges of the beauties of thoſe which are to come. I am very deſirous to ſee the continuation of the Mundane, which you have been kind enough to promiſe me. The plan which you have indicated is drawn according to truth and reaſon. In reality, the wiſdom of the Almighty could not create any thing in vain. It is the will of God that man ſhould enjoy what he beſtows, and to act otherwiſe would be but to counteract the intention of the Deity. Abuſe and exceſs are only capable of rendering that evil which is in itſelf good. My morality, ſir, is very accordant with yours. I own that I love

pleaſure,

pleaſure, and all which contributes to pleaſure. The brevity of life bids me make haſte to enjoy. We are allowed but a certain ſpace of time, by which we ought to profit. This, in itſelf, is no dangerous principle; though it is neceſſary that no falſe conſequences ſhould be deduced from it. I expect your eſſay on morality will be the hiſtory of my own thoughts.

Although my greateſt pleaſure is ſtudy, and the cultivation of the fine arts, you, ſir, better than any perſon, know how much they require repoſe, tranquillity, and a collected mind.

Far from the noiſy crowd the god retired,
Whene'er ſome mighty theme his boſom fired,
And on the diſtant hill his lyre he ſtrung,
And to the ſiſter Muſes ſweetly ſung.

To ſuitors coy, except the choſen few,
The ſiſter Muſes, well Apollo knew,
Delight in peace, delight the vain to ſhun,
By numerous labours only to be won.

Immortal as themſelves, the bleſt Voltaire
Their joys and raptures is allow'd to ſhare.

It is great raſhneſs for a ſcholar, or, to ſpeak more properly, a frog of the ſacred valley, auda-

ciouſly to croak in the preſence of Apollo. I acknowledge my ſin, I make confeſſion, and implore abſolution; this the eſteem in which I hold you may merit. It is difficult to be ſilent on certain truths of which the mind is thoroughly perſuaded, though at the riſk of expreſſing ourſelves well or ill. I am in this predicament, in which you have yourſelf placed me, conſequently you ought to be more indulgent to me than any perſon.

I am,

With all the reſpect you ſo well deſerve,

Your very affectionate friend.

LETTER XI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Berlin, January 14, 1737.

YOU have the kindeſt manner of obliging in the world. I received a packet addreſſed to me. I knew the ſeals, opened it, and found Merope. I read, was delighted, admired, and am obliged to increaſe the gratitude I owe you, and which I had ſuppoſed incapable of augmentation.

tation. Merope is one of the fineſt tragedies that has ever been written. The progreſs of the piece is very artful; terror increaſes at each ſcene, and I was charmed by the maternal tenderneſs which is here the ſubſtitute of the paſſion of love. I muſt own that the voice of nature appeared to me infinitely more pathetic than that of ſo frivolous a paſſion. The verſes abound in noble expreſſions, and the ſentiments are dignified. In fine, the fable, the moral conduct of the piece, the preſervation of probability, and the denouement, all are as happily accompliſhed as can be wiſhed. Of all the men in the world, you alone are capable of writing a piece ſo perfect as Merope. I am in raptures, in ecſtaſies, and I ſhould never have done, were it not for the apprehenſion of offending your modeſty.

Though I cannot pay you in your own coin, I nevertheleſs wiſh to afford you ſome proof of my gratitude; and I intreat you will preſerve the ring which I ſend you, as a token of the pleaſure which has been given me by your incomparable tragedy. Had you never written any thing but Merope, this play alone would have been ſufficient to make your name known to ages the moſt remote; but you have com-

poſed works enough to immortaliſe twenty great men, each of whom would have fame ſufficient.

You have very ſenſibly obliged me by the attention which you have paid me on every new occaſion. I muſt ever remain in your debt, and am angry at myſelf becauſe of my inability to teſtify the whole of thoſe ſentiments, and that eſteem, with which I am,

Your very faithful, affectionate friend.

Do not forget to ſay a thouſand kind things, in my behalf, to the incomparable Emily. There are ſome errors of the copyiſt in Merope, which I will mark and ſend on the firſt opportunity, that you may be kind enough to correct them for me. Ceſario is not yet arrived: it muſt be confeſſed that love is a great maſter.

LETTER XII.

From M. de Voltaire.

February, 1737.

THE laurel wither'd on th' expiring tree,
The Arts all languiſh'd, and the Virtues fled,
While Av'rice blindfold, and diſloyal Fraud,
Seated with kings, had ſeiz'd the bolt of Jove.
Nature,

Nature, indignant at the ſight, exclaim'd,
" Ye nations hear! As fortunate as juſt,
" A hero ſhall be born, who bleſs'd by me
" Shall ſing like Maro, like Auguſtus reign,
" Of kings the model, and of earth the pride."

She ſpake, the north pole to the centre ſhook;
The gods aſſembling run, fair Truth deſcends,
The myrtle, olive, and the laurel bloom,
And Frederick appears!

Let not your modeſty, ſir, be offended by this little flight of enthuſiaſm, the effect of that veneration, that great tenderneſs, of which my heart is ſenſible.

I have received ſome charming letters from your royal highneſs, and verſes ſuch as were written by Catullus, in the age of Cæſar. Are you determined then to excel in every thing?

I hear, at laſt, it was Socrates and not Frederick that your royal highneſs beſtowed upon me. Let me repeat, ſir, I deteſt the perſecutors of Socrates, without much troubling myſelf concerning the flat-noſed ſage.

What's Socrates to me? Be Frederick mine.

How great is the difference between an Athe-

nian babbler, with his familiar demon, and a prince who is the delight of mankind, and who ſhall reſtore happineſs to the world!

I have met with ſome perſons from Berlin at Amſterdam: *Fruere famâ tui, Germanice.* They ſpeak of your royal highneſs in tranſport. I queſtion every body I meet concerning you. I ſay—*Ubi eſt Deus meus? Deus tuus*, they reply, poſſeſſes the fineſt regiment in all Europe; *Deus tuus* excels in the arts, and the gentle pleaſures; he has more knowledge than Alcibiades, plays on the flute like Telemachus, and is ſuperior to both the Greeks. Hearing this, I exclaim, with good old Simeon,

> When ſhall my eyes behold the Saviour of my life *?

I ſhould before have ſent your royal highneſs the philoſophy which has been promiſed, and the Maid of Orleans, which has *not* been promiſed; but firſt, ſir, be aſſured I have not yet had a moment to myſelf; ſecondly, you muſt underſtand that the maid and the philoſopher are both committed to hemlock †; and, in the

* The text alluded to is "For mine eyes have ſeen thy "ſalvation." T.

† Vont tout droit à la ciguë.

third

third place, doubt not, ſir, that the curioſity which you excite in Europe, as being at the ſame time a prince and a thinking being, continually occaſions all eyes to be upon you.

Our words and actions are watched; every enquiry is made; all is known.

There are ſome charming verſes in the world which are attributed to Auguſtus-Virgil-Frederic; and Tournemine exclaims

"The form immenſe beholding, he ſhall ſay,
"Yes, matter thinks!"

Your royal highneſs did not ſend me this! How then do I know it? Be aſſured, ſir, that each foreign miniſter, however much attached he may be to you, and however amiable in himſelf, will ſacrifice every thing to the trifling merit of relating news to his ſuperiors, by whom he is employed. This being premiſed, I ſhall ſend the packet which I venture to addreſs to your royal highneſs to Weſel. Permit me once more to repeat, like Lucretius to Memmius.

Tantum Relligio potuit ſuadere malorum.

This line ought to be the motto of the work. You are the only Prince on earth to whom I ſhould

ſhould dare to ſend it. Look upon me, ſir, as the moſt faithful of your ſubjects; for I have, and will have, no other maſter. After having ſo ſaid, decide for yourſelf.

I ſhall immediately leave Holland, in deſpite of myſelf; friendſhip recals me to Cirey; a perſon is arrived here who has rouzed me from my ſlumbers. The greateſt prince on earth is become my confidant. Should your royal highneſs have any commands, I intreat you will addreſs them to M. du Breuil, at Amſterdam, who will ſend them to me. They will come late to hand, for which reaſon, in my complaints againſt Providence, there will be found a long article on the extreme injuſtice of not having placed Cirey in Pruſſia.

I am, Sir,

Indulge me with the expreſſion,

With the moſt tender veneration, &c.

LETTER XIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Berlin, February, 1737 *.

IT was with great pleaſure that I received *La Defence du Mondain*, and your pleaſant verſes on the ſubject of the pope's mule. Each of theſe pieces is charming in its kind. The falſe zeal of your devout neighbour is exceedingly characteriſtic of many perſons, who, ſtupid in their holineſs, tax every body with ſins, while they themſelves are blind to their own vices. Nothing can be more happy than the tranſition to the wine with which your zealot moiſtens his throat, grown dry by the heat of diſputation. The poor who lives on the vanity of the great, the gods, who, in the time of Tullus, were of wood, and of gold, under the conſulſhip of Lucullus, &c. are all paſſages, the beauties of which make large ſtrides toward immortality.

* The Berlin edition dates January 23. T.

But

But may I be allowed, ſir, to mention my doubts? By ſo doing, I ſhall gain inſtruction from the excellent reaſons with which you will certainly remove them. Is the epithet chimerical allowable, when applied to the Roman hiſtory, which is confirmed by the teſtimony of ſo many authors, ſo many reſpectable monuments of antiquity, and an infinity of medals, a part of which only would be neceſſary to eſtabliſh the truths of religion.

Standards of hay among the Romans are to me unknown; my ignorance muſt be my excuſe; but, from what I can recollect of hiſtory, the firſt ſtandards among the Romans were hands, faſtened to the ends of poles.

In me, ſir, you ſee a diſciple who aſks inſtruction, at the ſame time that you ſee a ſincere friend who acts with frankneſs, and hopes your juſt and penetrating mind will eaſily perceive that it is my friendſhip alone which ſpeaks. Let me intreat you to treat me after the ſame manner. I confeſs my reflections are rather thoſe of a mathematician than the remarks of a poet.

With reſpect to the eſteem I have for you, that is ſo perfect that it muſt ever continue the ſame.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rheinſberg, February 8, 1737.

DO not give yourſelf any trouble concerning the rumour which is ſpread of the correſpondence between us; ſuch a rumour can neither be painful to you nor me. True it is that there are ſuperſtitious perſons, many of whom are here to be found, and perhaps more than in other parts, who have thought it ſcandalous that I ſhould hold any ſuch correſpondence. Theſe perſons beſide ſuſpect I do not rigorouſly adhere to every thing which they call articles of faith. They have been ſo highly prejudiced by the calumnies to which your enemies give utterance, with every degree of malignity, that theſe good bigots very devoutly damn all who prefer you to Luther and Calvin, and who are ſo intolerably *ſtiff-necked* as to dare to write to you. That I might releaſe myſelf from all importunity, I thought the beſt way would be

to

to let the gazette writer of Holland and Amſterdam underſtand I ſhould be obliged to him not to mention me in any manner.

Such, ſir, is the truth of every thing that has happened, and in which you may confide. I can aſſure you that I honour myſelf for my own eſteem of you, and that I think it a glory to pay homage to your genius. I would even conſent to have all the paſſages in my letters, in which I have ſpoken of you, printed; to teſtify to the eyes of the whole world, that I do not bluſh to aſk information from a man who deſerves to be my tutor, and who has no defect, except that of being ſuperior to the reſt of mankind. But, ſir, you have no need of a witneſs ſo feeble to confirm a fame which you yourſelf have ſo well eſtabliſhed. The foundation you have laid is more noble and more ſecure than any that could be built on my ſuffrages.

In any other age except that in which we live, I ſhould not have forbidden the ſieur Franchin to ſpeak of me in whatever manner he ſhould pleaſe. He would never riſk becoming the Bajazet of mount Saint Michael. It was a rule dictated by prudence; and you know, ſir, we muſt cede to circumſtances, and accommodate ourſelves to the times. I ſaw myſelf obliged to put it in practice.

You

You received the verſes I addreſſed to you with ſo much indulgence that I have ventured to ſend you an ode on oblivion. The ſubject has not, to my knowledge, ever been touched. I requeſt, ſir, you will read it with all the inflexibility of a maſter, and all the rigid ſeverity of a critic. I ſhall gain inſtruction by your corrections, which will be to me ſo many precepts, dictated by Apollo himſelf, and inſpired by the Muſes.

You will oblige me, ſir, by noticing your doubts concerning the metaphyſics of Wolf. I ſhall ſoon ſend you the remainder of the work. I imagine you will attack him on the definition which he gives of the *ſimple being*.

There is a work on ethics, written by this author, and the ſubject is treated in the ſame order which is obſerved in his metaphyſics. The propoſitions are intimately connected one with the other, and, if I may ſo be allowed to ſay, mutually take hands to ſtrengthen each other. A perſon of the name of Jordan, whom you muſt have ſeen at Paris, has undertaken the tranſlation. He has forſaken Saint Paul, in favour of Ariſtotle.

Wolf, at the end of his metaphyſics, ſhews the exiſtence of a ſoul, diſtinct from the body. He thus explains himſelf on the ſubject of immor-

tality. "The ſoul having been created by God "in an inſtant, and not in any ſucceſſion of "time, God could not annihilate it, except by "a formal act of his will." He ſeems to believe in the eternity of the earth, though he does not ſpeak in terms ſo clear as might have been deſired.

The moſt evident propoſition, according to my feeble intelligence, is that the earth is eternal, relative to time, or relative to a ſucceſſion of actions; but that God is beyond time, and muſt have been before all things. The world however is certainly much older than we ſuppoſe it to be. If God has willed creation from all eternity, the will and the deed being in him but the ſame thing, the neceſſary conſequence is that the world is eternal.

I muſt intreat, ſir, you would not aſk me what I underſtand by the word eternal, for I previouſly confeſs that I employ a term the meaning of which I do not myſelf comprehend. Metaphyſical queſtions are not to be reſolved by man. We in vain endeavour to divine things which are beyond our conceptions, and in this ignorant world, the moſt probable conjecture paſſes for the beſt ſyſtem.

Mine is to adore the ſupreme Being, who alone is good, alone is merciful, and who therefore

fore merits my homage. I ſoften and alleviate, as much as I have the power, the miſeries to which humanity is liable, and in other reſpects I rely on the will of the Creator, who will diſpoſe of me as he ſhall ſee good, and from whom, happen what will, I have nothing to fear. I imagine that ſuch is very nearly your confeſſion of faith.

If reaſon dictate my words, and if I dare flatter myſelf ſhe now ſpeaks with my tongue, it is in a manner which is advantageous to you. She renders you juſtice as the greateſt man of France, and as a mortal who does honour to language. If ever I ſhould go to France, the firſt queſtion I ſhould aſk would be, "Where is M. "de Voltaire?" Neither the king nor his court, Paris nor Verſailles, the fair ſex nor pleaſure, would have any part in my journey; it would be undertaken for you alone.

Permit me once again to attack you relative to the poem of the Maid of Orleans. If you have confidence enough in me to think me incapable of betraying a man whom I eſteem, if you believe me to be a worthy man, you will not refuſe my requeſt. The latter is a character I value too highly ever to forfeit it; and thoſe who know me know I am neither indiſcreet nor imprudent.

Continue, ſir, to inſtruct the world; the torch of truth could not be confided to better hands. I admire you at a diſtance, not however renouncing the hope to have the ſatisfaction of one day ſeeing you. This you have promiſed me, and I reſerve the right of calling it to your recollection to ſome future time.

Be aſſured, ſir, of my eſteem. I do not grant it lightly, nor lightly withdraw it. Such are the ſentiments with which I am,

SIR,

Your ever affectionate friend.

LETTER XV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, February, 1737 *.

I HAVE been agreeably ſurpriſed, ſir, by the verſes which you have kindly addreſſed to me, and which are worthy of their author. The moſt barren ſubject becomes fruitful in

* The Berlin edition dates March 6.

your

your hands. You ſpeak of me, and I no longer know myſelf: all you touch is turned to gold.

Braving oblivion and the taunts of time,
Immortaliz'd by thee, my name ſhall live:
Still, as thy works deſcend, from age to age,
The ſuffrages receiving of poſterity,
Conquering the world, nay conquering envy's
ſelf,
With endleſs renovation ſhall I riſe.
The temple they in which my ſtatue ſtands,
The fame that's due alone to thee partaking.

Who knows whether Alexander the Great would have now been heard of, had not Quintus Curtius, and ſome famous hiſtorians, been careful to write and tranſmit the hiſtory of his life? The valiant Achilles and the ſage Neſtor might not have eſcaped the abyſs of oblivion, had they not been rendered famous by Homer. I can aſſure you I neither am a kind of, nor a candidate to become, a great man. I am ſimply an individual known only to a ſmall part of the continent, and whoſe name, according to all appearance, will only ſerve to decorate ſome genealogical tree, and afterward be conſigned to forgetfulneſs and obſcurity.

I am ſurpriſed at my imprudence, when I reflect on having addreſſed verſes to you. Yet, at the very moment that I diſapprove my own temerity, I fall into exactly the ſame error; Boileau ſays,

> Aſſes, by nature taught, inſtinctive bray;
> Let aſſes therefore nature's laws obey,
> Nor ſtrive, while ſounds diſcordant they prolong,
> To ape the nightingale's melodious ſong.

I intreat, ſir, you would become my poetical inſtructor, as you are capable of being in all things. You will never find a diſciple with more docility and obedience. Far from being offended at your corrections, I ſhall underſtand them as the moſt certain marks of that friendſhip which you entertain for me. I am ſo totally at leiſure that I have time to occupy myſelf with any ſcience I ſhall pleaſe. I endeavour to profit by this indolence which I attempt to transform into wiſdom, by my application to the ſtudy of philoſophy and hiſtory, and by amuſing myſelf with poetry and muſic. I live at preſent like a man, and think ſuch a life infinitely preferable to the majeſtic gravity and the tyrannic conſtraint of courts. I do not love a kind

of

of exiſtence which is meaſured by the yard; freedom only has any charms for me.

Prejudiced perſons perhaps have drawn a picture of me too much to my advantage: their friendſhip has ſupplied my want of merit. Recollect, I entreat you, ſir, the deſcription which you have given of fame.

> With lips of levity, the babbler Fame
> Alike is prodigal of truth or lies.

When perſons of a certain rank do but half fulfil their duties, the prize is adjudged to them which others are not permitted to receive till the work is fully accompliſhed. Whence can this ſtrange difference ariſe? Either we are leſs capable than others of doing what we ought, or vile flattery exalts our leaſt actions above their worth.

Auguſtus, late king of Poland, could calculate a ſeries of figures in arithmetic with tolerable facility, and every body was very eager to vaunt of his ſuperior ſkill in the mathematics; though he was even ignorant of the elements of algebra.

Excuſe me from citing other examples, which eaſily might be cited.

There has been no monarch of the preſent age really well informed, the czar Peter I. ex-

cepted. He was not only the legiſlator of his country, he was perfectly acquainted with maritime affairs. He was architect, anatomiſt, ſurgeon (ſometimes a dangerous one), an expert ſoldier, and a conſummate œconomiſt. Had he but received a leſs barbarous, leſs ferocious, education than that which a country could afford where abſolute authority was conſpicuous only in acts of cruelty, he might then have become a model for all future monarchs.

I was aſſured you were an amateur of paintings; this was what determined me to ſend you the head of Socrates, the workmanſhip of which is tolerable. I requeſt you will remain ſatisfied with my intention.

I wait very impatiently for the maid and the philoſopher, who are both *committed to hemlock.* I aſſure you I will keep inviolable ſecreſy on the ſubject: no perſon ſhall know that you have ſent me the two works, and much leſs ſhall they be ſeen. I will make this a point of honour. I cannot ſay more, feeling, as I do, how unworthy it would be to betray a friend whom I eſteem and by whom I am obliged, through my own indiſcretion. Foreign miniſters are privileged ſpies. My confidence is neither blind nor deſtitute of foreſight on that ſubject.

Where could you obtain the epigram that I wrote on M. La Croze? I gave it to nobody but himſelf. The good large man of learning was himſelf the cauſe of this ſport, this ſally of imagination, the point of which conſiſts in a quibble, trivial enough, and which might be overlooked when the circumſtances were not known, and which in other reſpects was very inſipid. The work of father Tournemine is in the French library, where it was read by M. La Croze. He hates the Jeſuits as Chriſtians hate the Devil, and eſteems no religious order except thoſe of the congregation of Saint Maurice, one of whom he himſelf was.

You have left Holland!—I ſhall feel this increaſe of diſtance. Your letters will become ſtill greater rarities, and a thouſand vexatious impediments will concur to render the arrival of them leſs frequent. I ſhall profit by the addreſs which you have given me of the ſieur du Breuil, and ſhall very ſtrongly recommend it to him to haſten the departure of my letters, and the return of yours as much as poſſible.

May you enjoy every delight of life at Cirey! Your happineſs never will equal my wiſhes in your behalf, nor your own merits. I beg you will inform the marchioneſs du Chatelet that

ſhe

ſhe is the only perſon who could make me reſolve to give up M. de Voltaire, as ſhe is the only perſon who is worthy of his company. Were Cirey at the farther part of the world, I would not renounce the ſatisfaction of one day going thither. Kings have been known to travel on more trifling occaſions, and I aſſure you my curioſity is equal to my eſteem. Is it aſtoniſhing that I ſhould be deſirous to ſee the man moſt worthy of immortality, and whoſe own eſforts have made him immortal?

I am,

With all imaginable eſteem,

You very affectionate friend.

I have juſt received letters from Berlin, in which I am informed that the emperor's reſident has a printed copy of the Maid of Orleans. Do not accuſe me of indiſcretion,

LET-

LETTER XVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, March, 1737.

I KNOW not where to begin; I am intoxicated with pleasure, surprise, and gratitude.

Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina, pascite taurum.

You write verses in French, at Berlin, such as were written at Versailles, in the times of good taste, and the reign of pleasure. You send me the metaphysics of M. Wolf, and I venture to say that your royal highness is greatly suspected of having translated the work yourself. You send M. de Borck hither, to the abode of solitude, and you know how dear a man must be to me who is worthy of your favours. I receive four letters at once from your royal highness; and add to all this the bust of Socrates is at Cirey. I am dazzled with this excess of treasure; it is with difficulty that I can collect myself sufficiently to return you thanks. The great passions will speak first, and my greatest, sir, are for you and poetry.

In

In you great Alcibiades revives,
His virtues blooming, buried his defects:
Socrates' friend, of Anitus the foe,
You curſes from a bigot prieſt contemn!

No Oracle will e'er pronounce me ſage;
No Socrates am I: and ah! too far,
Too diſtant he, the ſovereign of my ſoul!
My Alcibiades, whoſe potent arm,
Or ſoon or late, from Hemlock-Anitus,
And bigot prieſt, will certain refuge grant,
Who elſe might graſp the conſecrated knife,
And ſhed my blood in moſt religious zeal.

Auguſtus formerly wrote verſes for Horace, and for Virgil, ſir; but Auguſtus has diſgraced himſelf by his proſcriptions. Charles IX. compoſed poetry, and poetry which had merit, for Ronſard; but Charles IX. was guilty, at leaſt, of having *permitted* what was even worſe than proſcriptions, the maſſacre of Saint Bartholomew. I can only compare you to our Henry the Great, and to Francis I. Your royal highneſs is no doubt acquainted with the charming ſong which Henry the Great wrote on his miſtreſs.

From

From Mars I hold my crown,
Of valour the desert;
Accept it from my hand,
You hold it of my heart.

Such were sovereigns models for men as well as for kings, yet these you will surpass. My heart was moved by all which M. de Borck told me of your royal highness, although he told me nothing new.

You must imagine, sir, it was long before I could obtain your letters, because of my journey. They were received by the marchioness du Chatelet, as also was the bust of Socrates. The sieur Thiriot might have obtained the packet from the post-office sooner, but it was in the hands of M. Chambrier, who, imagining it contained your portrait, was, as well he might be, desirous of keeping it. Emily is in despair to find it is only Socrates. The palace of Cirey still lives in hopes of being adorned by the picture of the only prince on earth; at least the only one to us. Emily expects and deserves it, and you are equitable.

M. Thiriot imagined I was going to Prussia, and the fame of your kindness to me persuaded many people it was truth. The news was inserted in the public papers almost a month ago, but

but the penetration of your own mind would teach your royal highneſs to underſtand my character better. I am certain you will do me the juſtice to remain perſuaded that I have an extreme deſire to pay my reſpects to you, but that I never had any intention to go to Pruſſia. I am incapable of taking any ſuch ſtep without a preciſe order.

The court of the king your father, and your royal highneſs, well may attract ſtrangers; but a man of letters who is attached to you ought not to go without being commanded.

A month ago I certainly did not imagine I ſhould have left Citey. Madame du Chatelet, of whom and of your royal highneſs it may ſurely be ſaid you are kindred ſouls, and between whom there is a pre-ordained harmony, ought to have detained me in her court, which without heſitation I prefer to that of all the kings on earth, as friend, philoſopher, and free man; for

Fuge ſuſpicari
Cujus octavum trepidavit ætas
Claudere luſtrum.

But a ſtorm aroſe and ſwept me from this happy retreat; detraction came in ſearch of me as

far

far as Cirey. I am perſecuted, ſince I have written the Henriade. Would you believe that I have been more than once reproached for having depicted the maſſacre of Saint Bartholomew in colours too black; I am called atheiſt becauſe I have ſaid men are not born for mutual deſtruction. In fine, the tempeſt grew louder, and, following the advice of my beſt friends, I departed. I had made a ſketch of the eaſy principles of the Newtonian philoſophy. Madam du Chatelet had her part in the work. Minerva dictated, and I wrote. I came to Leyden to labour, and render the work leſs unworthy of her and you; and repaired to Amſterdam to have it printed and the plates engraved. This will continue in hand all winter. Such is my hiſtory, and ſuch my occupation. The kindneſs of your royal highneſs required the confeſſion.

That I might avoid viſits, new acquaintance, and loſs of time, I aſſumed another name when I came to Holland; but the gazettes having invented injurious rumours, which were firſt circulated by my enemies, I immediately reſolved to confound them, and give them the lie by making myſelf known.

I have not yet had time to read the whole of the metaphyſics which you have deigned to ſend

me; the little I have read appears to me a chain of gold descending from heaven to earth. True it is, there are some links so loose that we fear lest they should break, yet they have been formed with so much art that I admire them, however fragile they may be.

I very well perceive it is possible to combat that kind of pre-established harmony to which M. Wolf wishes to come, and that many things may be said against his system; but no objection can be made to his virtue and his genius. To tax him with atheism and immorality, in fine, to persecute him, appears to me absurd. The theologians of all countries, who are people intoxicated by sacred chimeras, resemble the cardinals who condemned Galileo. Do they not desire to burn M. Wolf alive, because he is superior to them in understanding? Guardian angel of Wolf and of reason, great prince, vast and apt genius, cannot a glance from you awe the fools to silence?

In the letters which I have received from your royal highness, among many other traits worthy the prince and the philosopher, I remarked that where you said *Cæsar est supra grammaticam.* This is very true; it becomes a prince not to be

be a purist *, but it does not become him to write and spell like a woman. A prince ought to have received the best of educations of every kind; and when I am told that Louis XIV. was ignorant and incapable of writing his mother tongue, I conclude that he was ill educated. He was born with a clear and good understanding; but he was taught only to dance and play on the guitar. He never read, for if he had, and if he had been acquainted with history, you would not have seen so many French refugees at Berlin; your kingdom would not have been enriched in the year 1686 with the spoils of his; he would have paid less attention to the jesuit Le Tellier; he would have, &c. &c. &c.

Either your education has been worthy of your genius, sir, or you have educated yourself. There is not at present a prince on earth who thinks like you. I am very sorry you have no rivals. While I have life I shall be, &c.

* A term among the French to express an excess of delicacy in grammar, pronunciation, and phraseology. T.

LETTER XVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

March, 1737.

DELICIÆ HUMANI GENERIS,

THIS title is more dear to you than thoſe of lord, royal highneſs, and majeſty; nor is it leſs your due.

My firſt duty will be to render an account of my proceedings to your royal highneſs, for I am your declared ſubject. We catholics have a kind of ſacrament which we call confirmation. We ſelect a ſaint to be our patron in heaven, and a ſpecies of tutelary deity to us. I ſhould be glad to know why I am permitted to chooſe one of the minor gods rather than a king. You are certainly much better formed to be my king than Saint Francis of Aſſiſe, or Saint Dominic are to be my ſaints. To my king, therefore, I write, and I inform you, *Rex amate*, that I am returned to your little province of Cirey, where philoſophy, the Graces, freedom and ſtudy dwell; nothing is wanting there except the portrait of your majeſty. This you will not grant;

you

you will not ſuffer us to have images that we ſhould adore; you remember the holy text.

I have at length received the Socrates which your royal highneſs deigned to ſend me as a preſent. This preſent induced me once again to read all that Plato has ſaid of Socrates. I am ſtill of my former opinion.

The days of ancient Greece I own were bright,
But they're eclips'd, now Frederic ſees the light,
Berlin may ſoon ſurpaſs th' Athenian age,
For Frederic has ſurpaſs'd th' Athenian ſage.

Equally free from vulgar prejudice, and as modeſt as the Grecian was vain, you will not go to one of the Lutheran churches, there to publiſh yourſelf the wiſeſt of all mankind; you will rather confine yourſelf to the performance of all that can make you ſo; you will not proceed from houſe to houſe, like Socrates, and ſay to the maſter, ſir, you are a fool; to the preceptor, ſir, you are an aſs; and to the child, you are an ignorant little blockhead; you will be ſatisfied with thinking all this of the generality of thoſe animals called men, and will notwithſtanding exert yourſelf to render them happy.

I have to anſwer the criticiſms which your

royal highneſs has deigned to make, in one of your letters, relative to the ancient Romans, who, in the fields of Mars, formerly bore hay for their ſtandard.

The colonel of the fineſt regiment in Europe finds it painful to allow that the conquerors of the ſixth part of our continent had not always golden eagles borne before their armies; but all things have a beginning. When the Romans were only peaſants, they carried hay as their enſigns; when they were *populum latè regem*, they had golden eagles.

Ovid in his *Faſti* expreſsly ſays of the ancient Romans,

Non illos cœlo labentia ſigna movebant,
Sed ſua quæ magnum perdere crimen erat.

A ridiculous antitheſis to tell us they were unacquainted with celeſtial *ſigns*. They were only acquainted with the *ſigns* of their armies. He continues to ſay, ſpeaking of theſe ſigns, or of theſe *en*ſigns,

Illaque de fœno; ſed erat reverentia fœno
Quantaque nunc aquilas cernis habere tuas.
Pertica ſuſpenſos portabat longa maniplos:
Unde maniplaris nomina miles habet.

Here

Here are my wiſps of hay well proved.

With reſpect to the ancient periods of their hiſtory, I ſhall refer to your royal highneſs, as I ſhall reſpecting all ancient periods. What think you of Remus and Romulus, the ſons of the god Mars; of the ſhe-wolf; of the wood-pecker; of the bleeding head of a man which occaſioned the capitol to be built; of the gods of Lavinium, that travelled on foot from Alba to Lavinium; of the combat between Caſtor and Pollux at the lake of Nigillo; of Attilius Nævius, who cut ſtones with a razor; of the veſtal who drew a ſhip with her girdle; of the palladium; of the bucklers that fell from heaven; in fine, of Mutius Scevola; of Lucretia; of the Horatii; of Curtius; ſtories not leſs chimerical than the miracles I have juſt mentioned? We muſt aſſign all theſe, ſir, their places in the hall of Odin, with our holy vial, the ſhift of the Virgin Mary, the ſacred prepuce, and the legends of the Monks.

I am informed that your royal highneſs has lately done juſtice to M. Wolf. You will immortalize your name, and will render it dear to all ages, by protecting enlightened philoſophy againſt the abſurd and caballing theologian. Continue, great prince, great man, to trample on the monſter of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm;

that real enemy of the Deity and of reaſon. Be you the king of philoſophers; other monarchs are only the kings of men.

I daily return thanks to Heaven that you are in being. Louis XIV. whoſe hiſtory I have the honour to ſend your royal highneſs in manuſcript, paſſed the latter years of his life in miſerable diſputes concerning a ridiculous bull, in behalf of which he intereſted himſelf, without knowing why; he died bandied from prieſt to prieſt, and theſe prieſts anathematized each other with the moſt furious and frantic zeal. To ſuch dangers are princes expoſed. Ignorance, the mother of ſuperſtition, renders them the victims of bigots. The knowledge of which you are poſſeſſed renders you invulnerable to their attacks.

I have read the metaphyſics of Wolf with great attention. Will your royal highneſs permit me to give utterance to my thoughts? Either I am deceived, or you have deigned to tranſlate the book yourſelf. I have read little corrections in your own writing. Emily has read it with me.

From riſing Athens was this treaſure ſent:
Verſailles the courtly knows not of the gift,
And in her ignorance merits to remain.

This

This Emily, deſerving of Frederic, here joins in admiration and reſpect for the only prince whom ſhe thinks worthy to be a prince; for which reaſon her vexation at not poſſeſſing the portrait of your royal highneſs is the greater. Some things have been made ready according to your orders. I ſend this packet immediately to the maſter of the poſt-office of Treves, without paſſing by Paris; it will proceed thence to Weſel. Deign to give me your commands, if you wiſh I ſhould continue to purſue this method.

I am,

With profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, April 7th, 1737.

EVEN the very manner in which you affix your ſeals is an obliging pledge of the attention you pay me. You ſpeak to me in very flattering language; you load me with praiſes; you beſtow titles on me, which appertain only

to great men; and I ſink under the weight of your eulogies. The limits of my empire, ſir, would be very confined, were my empire only to conſiſt of men equal to you in merit. Are kings neceſſary to govern philoſophers? Can the ignorant become the conductors of the enlightened? Or may men who are the ſlaves of their paſſions overawe the vices of men, who, themſelves, are able to ſuppreſs vice; not by the fear of chaſtiſement, not by the puerile dread of hell and demons, but by the love of virtue? Reaſon is your guide and your ſovereign; Henry the Great is your protecting ſaint; any foreign aid would be ſuperfluous.

If, however, from the ſituation in which I am placed, I ſhall find myſelf capable of convincing you of the ſentiments I entertain for M. de Voltaire, you will obtain a ſaint in me whom you never ſhall invoke in vain. I ſhall begin by affording you a ſmall proof. You appear to deſire to have my portrait; yes, it is your will, and I have immediately ordered it to be painted. To convince you how highly the arts are honoured among us, know, ſir, there is no ſcience which we do not endeavour to ennoble. One of my gentlemen, named Knobelſdorf, who does not confine his talents to the handling of the pencil alone, has painted this portrait.

He

He knows he is working for you, and that you are a connoiſſeur. This is a ſufficient ſpur to make him emulous to ſurpaſs himſelf.

One of my intimate friends, the baron of Kayſerling, or Ceſario, will bring you my picture; he will be at Cirey toward the end of the next month, and when you ſee him you will judge whether he does not deſerve the eſteem of every worthy man. I intreat, ſir, you will place confidence in him. It is part of his charge to preſs you warmly on the ſubject of the Maid of Orleans, on the Newtonian philoſophy, on the hiſtory of Louis XIV. and on all which he can extort from you.

How might I reply to your verſes without having at leaſt been born a poet? I am not ſo blind to myſelf as to imagine I have talents for verſification. To write in a foreign language, to write poetry too, and, which is worſe, to know myſelf rejected by Apollo, is too much.

For rhyming's ſake I rhyme; but, tho' the pauſe
Were rightly plac'd, tho' ſuch inferior laws
Were well obſerv'd, in vain I ſtill might ſtrive;
Sternhold and Hopkins only would revive.
Yet, when I ſee thee riſe on eagle wing,
Like thee I wiſh to mount, like thee to ſing;

Venturing

Venturing to fly when ſcarcely I can crawl,
Melted my waxen wings, alas! I fall.

It muſt be owned we poets promiſe much and perform little. At the very moment I was making honourable amends, for all the bad verſes I had ſent you, I fell into the ſame error.

May Berlin rival Athens! I will hope the accompliſhment of the prophecy. Should it but be able to acquire M. de Voltaire it could not fail to become one of the moſt celebrated cities in Europe.

I cede to your reaſons, ſir; you have excellently juſtified your verſes. The Romans had wiſps of hay by way of ſtandards. I allow it. You enlighten, you inſtruct, you teach me even to profit by my own ignorance.

Which way could my regiment excite your curioſity? I am deſirous it ſhould be famous for its bravery, and not for its beauty. A regiment ought not to ſhine by exterior ſplendour, by vain trappings, pomp, and magnificence. The troops with whom Alexander ſubjected Greece, and conquered the greateſt part of Aſia, were accoutred very differently. Iron conſtituted their only ornament. They were, by long and painful habit, inured to labour; they were hardened

dened to ſupport hunger, thirſt, and all the rigours which are attendant on protracted war; they were intimately formed into one body, by vigorous and ſevere diſcipline, ſo that they all concurred to produce one effect, and were rendered capable to execute the moſt extenſive deſigns of their generals, with promptitude and energy.

With reſpect to the remote period of the Roman hiſtory, I find myſelf induced to maintain its truth, and that from a motive which will afford you ſome ſurpriſe. To explain myſelf, I ſhall be obliged to be a little circumſtantial, endeavouring at the ſame time to relate my anecdote with as much brevity as poſſible.

Some years ago, in a manuſcript of the Vatican, the hiſtory of Romulus and Remus was found, the narration of which was very different to that which had formerly been known. The manuſcript aſſerts that Remus eſcaped from the purſuit of his brother, and, that he might conceal himſelf from his jealous fury, he took refuge in the northern provinces of Germany, toward the banks of the Elbe; that he built a city which was ſituated near a great lake, to which he gave his name, and that after his death he was buried in an iſland which, riſing in the

middle of the water, formed a kind of hill, in the centre of the lake.

Four years ago, two monks were ſent here from the pope, to diſcover the city founded by Remus. According to the deſcription I have given, they imagined it muſt be Remuſberg; or, in other words, Mount-Remus. The good fathers dug in the iſland, and on every ſide to diſcover the remains of Remus; but, whether theſe remains were not preſerved with ſufficient care, or whether time which deſtroys all things had turned them to earth, certain it is that they diſcovered none ſuch.

A tradition, not better proved than the foregoing, tells us that, about a hundred years ago, when laying the foundations of this caſtle, two ſtones were found, on which were engraved the hiſtory of the flight of the vultures. Although the figures were greatly effaced, ſtill ſomething was to be perceived. Our Gothic anceſtors, who unfortunately were very ignorant, and little curious of antiquities, have neglected to preſerve theſe precious monuments of hiſtory, and conſequently have left us in obſcure incertitude, concerning the truth of ſo important a fact.

Not three months ſince, ſome men digging in the garden diſcovered an urn of Roman coins; but they were ſo ancient that the marks were al-

moſt effaced. I ſent them to M. La Croze, who conjectured they might appertain to the firſt or ſecond century.

I hope, ſir, you will kindly accept the anecdote I ſend, and in its behalf will excuſe the intereſt I take in every thing which relates to the hiſtory of one of the founders of Rome, whoſe aſhes I imagine I poſſeſs. I ſhall not in other reſpects be accuſed of too much incredulity: if I ſin it is not from ſuperſtition.

Suſpecting even that which is probable, I wiſh to avoid an erroneous creed by the ſearch of truth. The grand and the wonderful too much approach the fabulous, and Truth is known by her ſimplicity.

The love of truth, and the horror I have for injuſtice, have occaſioned me to take the part of M. Wolf. Naked Truth has little empire over the minds of moſt men; in order to ſhew herſelf ſhe muſt be decorated with rank, acquire dignity, and the protection of the great. Ignorance, fanaticiſm, ſuperſtition, and blind zeal, mingled with jealouſy, have perſecuted M. Wolf. By theſe have crimes been imputed to him; but the world at length begins to perceive the dawn of his innocence.

I wiſh not to arrogate fame to myſelf which is not my due, nor aſſume merit from the labours

bours of others. I aſſure you I have not tranſlated the metaphyſics of Wolf; that honour is claimed by one of my friends. A ſucceſſion of events has led him into Ruſſia, where he has been ſome months, though he deſerved a better fate. I have no other part in the work than that of having occaſioned it, and that of making corrections. The copyiſt has the remainder of the tranſlation, of which I am in daily expectation, and it ſhall ſoon be ſent you.

To be remembered by Emily is very flattering: I beg you to aſſure her ſhe holds a very diſtinguiſhed place in my ſentiments.

For Europe ranks her with her greateſt men.

What can I refuſe to a Newtonian Venus, where the ſublimeſt ſciences are adorned with all the charms of youth, beauty, and grace? The marchioneſs du Chatelet deſires to have my portrait; I rather ought to requeſt hers; but I ſubmit; each ſtroke of the pencil will prove the admiration I have for her.

I ſend this letter by favour of the ſieur du Breuil Tronchin, according to the direction you have given me. I believe it will be proper to conſult meaſures with the maſter of the poſt-office of Treves, for the better regulation of our

little

little correſpondence. I ſhall wait till you have made ſome arrangements with him on this ſubject before I ſhall write to him by that channel. When will the greateſt man in France no longer have need of ſo many precautions? Shall your countrymen alone envy you the glory which is your due? Depart from a country ſo ungrateful, and come into one where you will be adored, that your genius may ſome day find a remunerator in this new Athens.

Here thee attending let the fine arts throng,
Thy philoſophic treaſures hither bring;
The nations of the wiſe ſhall round thee ſwarm,
The quick'ning ways of genius to enjoy.
Our myrtles and our laurels wait unpluck'd,
By fair Emilia's hand entwin'd to be,
And form freſh garlands to bedeck thy brow.
The ſight ſhall make Rouſſeau th' envenom'd burſt.

Your letters give me infinite pleaſure, but I own I ſhould much prefer the ſatisfaction of converſing with you, and perſonally aſſuring you of the perfect eſteem with which I ſhall ever remain, &c.

LET-

LETTER XIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

* * * * * * * * * * * *
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SUCH are the reflections which your royal highness commanded me to make on the ode * with which your royal highness has deigned to embellish French poetry. Suffer me again to repeat my astonishment at the honour you confer on our language. But, without intruding upon your modesty each time I felt admiration, I immediately proceeded to examine each stanza apart.

After having gathered poetical flowers with your royal highness, we must now pass on to the thorns of metaphysics.

I, with your royal highness, admire the vast mind, the precision of method, the art of M. Wolf. I think it shameful to persecute and glorious to protect him, and behold with extreme pleasure that you shield him like a prince, and judge him like a philosopher.

* On Oblivion.

With

With ſuperior underſtanding, your royal highneſs has felt the critical, the doubtful point of his metaphyſics, which in other reſpects are admirable. The *Simple Being* of which he ſpeaks gives birth to many difficulties. In article XVI. he ſays, there are every where ſimple beings where there are combined beings. His own words are—" If there are no ſimple " beings, the reſult muſt be that all the parts of " the ſmalleſt muſt conſiſt of other parts; and, as " we could then ſhew no cauſe from which com- " bined beings could originate, like as we " could not comprehend how a number ſhould " exiſt if it did not contain various units. " Hence we muſt finally conceive ſimple beings, " which have given exiſtence to combined " beings." Again, in article LXXXI.—" Sim- " ple beings poſſeſs neither figure nor ſize, nor " can they fill ſpace."

Might we not anſwer to theſe aſſertions——?

1. A combined being is neceſſarily diviſible *ad infinitum*, which is mathematically demonſtrated.

2. If it be not phyſically diviſible *in infinitum*, the reaſon is our inſtruments are not ſufficiently minute; and becauſe the form and generation of things could not ſubſiſt, if the firſt principles of which things are formed divided and decompoſed themſelves. Divide and decompoſe the

firſt germ of man, or of plants, and there would neither be men nor plants. Therefore there muſt be bodies undivided.

But it does not thence follow that theſe firſt germs, theſe firſt principles, are in reality indiviſible, ſimple, and without extent; for they would then not be bodies, and we ſhould find that matter was not compoſed of matter, and that bodies were not compoſed of bodies; which would be ſomewhat ſtrange.

What then are the firſt principles of matter? They are diviſible bodies, no doubt; but which ſhall remain undivided ſo long as the nature of things ſhall continue to ſubſiſt.

But what will be a ſufficient reaſon for the exiſtence of bodies? The thing can certainly only be conceived after two manners; either bodies are ſuch neceſſarily, by nature, or they are the work of a free will, of a ſupreme and free being. There is no optional third opinion. But, let us chooſe which of theſe two opinions we pleaſe, the difficulties to reſolve will be great.

Which is the opinion that I ſhall embrace? That in which, after a proper eſtimate, there ſhall be the feweſt abſurdities to digeſt. I find the moſt contradiction, difficulty, and dilemma, in the ſyſtem of the neceſſary exiſtence of

matter; I therefore range myſelf on the ſide of thoſe who believe in a ſupreme being, as the leaſt contradictory, the moſt probable.

I do not believe any demonſtration, properly ſo called, can be obtained of the exiſtence of that being, independent of matter. I remember I ſomewhat embarraſſed the famous Dr. Clarke, in England, by ſaying to him—"A train of "ideas which continually leaves remaining "difficulties cannot be called demonſtration." To ſay that the ſquare conſtructed on the largeſt ſide of a right angled triangle is equal to the ſum of the ſquares of the two other ſides, is to ſpeak after demonſtration; which, complicated as it may be, leaves no doubt behind. But the exiſtence of a creator leaves difficulties inſurmountable by the human mind. Therefore this truth cannot be placed among thoſe which are properly demonſtrable. I believe it to be truth, and I believe it becauſe it is the moſt probable. It is a ray of light ſhining in a chaos of darkneſs.

Much more might be ſaid; but to fatigue your royal highneſs with philoſophical reflections would only be carrying gold to the mines of Peru.

The whole of metaphyſics, in my opinion, contains two diviſions; the firſt, all which men

of good ſenſe know; and the ſecond, all which they never will know.

We know, for example, what a ſimple idea is, and what a complex; but what the being is which has ideas we never ſhall know. We meaſure bodies, but we never underſtand what matter is. We can only judge of ſuch things by analogy. It is a ſtick which nature has put into the hands of the blind, and by the aid of which we are able to walk, but liable to fall.

Analogy teaches me that beaſts, being organized like me, having ſentiments and ideas like me, may very well be what I am. When I wiſh to proceed farther I come to an abyſs, and ſtop ſhort on the brink of the precipice.

All I know is, that, whether matter be eternal (which is very incomprehenſible) whether it has been created in the ſucceſſion of time (which is ſubject to many difficulties) whether the ſoul periſh with the body, or whether it be to enjoy immortality, you cannot, under ſuch incertitude, act more wiſely, more worthy of yourſelf, than to beſtow on your ſoul, periſhable or not periſhable, every virtue, all kind of wiſdom, to enjoy all innocent pleaſures, to live like a king, a man, and a ſage, to be happy yourſelf and to render others happy.

I contemplate you as a preſent ſent from heaven

heaven to earth. I admire when I perceive that, at your age, you have not been hurried away by the love of pleaſure; and I infinitely congratulate you that philoſophy has left you a taſte for pleaſure. We were not born to do nothing but read Plato and Leibnitz, to meaſure curves, or to arrange facts in our minds; we have ſenſations to which we muſt attend, and paſſions which we muſt gratify, without ſuffering ourſelves to be under their dominion.

I am charmed with your ethics. My heart feels it was born to be the ſubject of yours, and my ſatisfaction at thinking like you in all things is too great.

Your royal highneſs did me the honour to inform me, in your laſt letter, that you regard the late Czar as the greateſt man of the paſt age; and that the eſteem which you have for him does not make you blind to his cruelties. He was a great monarch, a legiſlator, a founder of cities; but, highly as politics may be indebted to him, how great are the reproaches which may be made him by humanity! We admire the king, but we cannot love the man. Be what you are, ſir, and you ſhall be admired and beloved by the whole world.

One of the greateſt benefits you can confer on men will be to tread ſuperſtition and fana-

ticiſm under foot, and not to permit a man in a black gown to perſecute other men who are not of his opinion. Certain it is that philoſophers never trouble the ſtate; wherefore then ſhould the ſtate trouble philoſophers? In what did the reaſon of Bayle injure Holland; or wherefore did the fanatical preacher Jurieu acquire ſufficient influence to rob him of his ſmall fortune? Philoſophers only aſk to live undiſturbed; they wiſh but to remain at peace, under the eſtabliſhed government; but there is no theologian who does not deſire to be maſter of the ſtate. Is it poſſible that men whoſe only ſcience conſiſts in the gift of ſpeaking without underſtanding themſelves, or being underſtood by others, ſhould have ruled, and ſtill ſhould continue to rule, almoſt univerſally?

The countries of the north have this advantage over the ſouth of Europe, that theſe tyrants of the mind have leſs influence there than elſewhere. For this reaſon, the princes of the north are generally leſs ſuperſtitious, and leſs malignant, than other princes. An Italian prince employs poiſon, and goes to confeſſion. Proteſtant Germany is neither in poſſeſſion of ſuch fools, nor of ſuch monſters; and I ſhould have no difficulty to prove, in general, that the

leaſt

leaſt ſuperſtitious kings have always been the beſt.

You perceive, worthy inheritor of the ſpirit of Marcus Aurelius, the freedom with which I addreſs you. You are almoſt the only prince on earth who merits thus to be addreſſed.

LETTER XX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, May 9th, 1737.

I HAVE juſt received your letter, dated April the 17th, which has travelled with tolerable ſpeed. I know not how it happens that mine are ſo long on the road.

How ſuſpicious does your indulgence for my verſes appear! Be ingenuous, ſir; own you dread the fate of Philoxenus, and ſuppoſe me another Dionyſius, otherwiſe your language would be very different. A ſincere friend ſpeaks diſagreeable but ſalutary truths. You would have criticiſed the monument, and the funeral obſequies which precede the battles in the fourth ſtanza of the ode; you would have condemned the metaphor of chagrin diſarmed,

which is too bold, &c. In a word, you would have ſaid lop off theſe uſeleſs and ſcattered branches. To what purpoſe tell the half blind that his ſight is good? Will he ſee the better? I intreat you, ſir, to become my rigid cenſor, as you already have been my poetical example and tutor. Do not ſtop at the finger-nails of a figure by a very ignorant ſculptor, but correct the whole work.

I ſend you the continuation of the tranſlation of Wolf, as far as the paragraph 770. You will receive the concluſion from my dear Ceſario, my little ambaſſador to the province of reaſon, the terreſtrial paradiſe.

I do not place my ſovereign good in the ſplendour of magnificence, but in unpolluted pleaſures, and the intercourſe of the moſt reaſonable of beings among men. In a word, could I diſpoſe of myſelf, I ſhould come in perſon to Cirey, there to reaſon my fill. I place you at the head of all thinking beings: the Creator would certainly find it difficult to produce a mind more ſublime than yours.

Bleſs'd genius, whom unnumber'd gifts adorn,
To prove th' extent of nature's powers born!
Prolific of the vulgar and the great,
Form'd to exiſt in tumult or in ſtate,

Of

Of favours frugal, Heaven but ſeldom grants
That wiſdom which mankind each moment wants;
Its native ſons but rarely ſtand reveal'd:
Alas! how few Voltaires ten ages yield!

My portrait will be finiſhed to-day; the painter is exerting all his powers that he may be ſucceſsful. I am already indebted to you for ſome graceful touches, but my conſcience would accuſe me were I not to give you this information.

How can I finiſh my letter without a word to Emily? I intreat you to aſſure her of my perfect eſteem. It is your duty to procure her portrait for me; I dare not make the requeſt myſelf.

Could my body travel as faſt as my thoughts, I would perſonally tell you how great is the eſteem and reſpect with which

I am, &c,

LET-

LETTER XXI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Amate, May 14th, 1737 *.

I HOPE you will excuſe the injuſtice I did your ſincerity in my laſt letter. I am charmed to find myſelf deceived, and to ſee that you know me well enough to be deſirous of correcting my faults. I paſs condemnation on my ode. I own all the errors with which you tax me; but, far from being repulſed, I ſhall again importune you with more of my writings, which I ſhall intreat you to correct with the ſame ſeverity. If I gain no other advantage, I ſhall always have that of extorting ſome good verſes from you.

The Graces ever waiting at your beck,
Beſtow the charms my languid verſes want,
And carefully ſupply my lack of ſkill;
Their flow'rets ſcatt'ring o'er my barren ode.
Thus, by the magic pow'r which they impart,
Whate'er you deign to touch is turn'd to gold.

* Dated Ruppin, May 20th, 1737, in the edition of Berlin. T.

Let

Let us at preſent ſpeak of philoſophy. In all things you take the road of genius, which, far from feeling itſelf animated by mean and contemptible jealouſy, eſteems merit wherever it is met with, and acknowledges it without prejudice. I thank you, in behalf of M. Wolf, for the advantageous manner in which you explain yourſelf on what relates to him. I perceive, ſir, you have very well underſtood the difficulties which ſurround the *ſimple being*. Permit me to reply.

Mathematicians prove that a line may be divided *ad infinitum*, and that any body which has two ſides, or two faces (which amounts to the ſame) may in like manner be ſo divided. But, if I do not miſtake, there is no relation either to line or points in the propoſition of M. Wolf; it ſpeaks of units, or the indiviſible parts which compoſe matter. No perſon can, or ever will, perceive theſe units; we, therefore, can have no idea of them, for we have no clear ideas of things which are not palpable to the ſenſes. M. Wolf ſays every thing which a ſimple being is not, and he ſets aſide length, breadth, and ſpace with great precaution, that he may prevent mathematical reaſoning, which is not applicable to his ſimple being, becauſe it does not contain any of the properties of matter.

Our

Our philoſopher employs the artifice of Saint Paul, who, after having carried us into the heaven of heavens, there leaves us to our own imaginations, ſupplying by the term *unſpeakable* what could not have been explained without danger of being himſelf entrapped.

Still it ſeems to me that nothing can be more true than the propoſitions that every complex being muſt conſiſt of parts; that theſe parts may be as numerous as you pleaſe, but that we muſt finally come to units; and that, for want of organs, eyes and feelings ſufficiently ſubtle, and of inſtruments ſufficiently delicate, we never can decompoſe matter, ſo as to diſcover the units.

What do you figure to yourſelf when you recollect a regiment compoſed of fifteen hundred men? You imagine fifteen hundred men as ſo many units, combined under one chief. Take an individual from among theſe men; I find him to be a finite being, that has extent, ſize, and figure. I find him to be diviſible: experience proves him ſo to be; but I cannot ſay that he is diviſible *in infinitum*. Is it poſſible that he ſhould, at the ſame time, be a finite and an infinite being? No, for that implies contradiction; and, as nothing can be and not be at the ſame time, man neceſſarily cannot be infinite; he therefore is not diviſible *in infinitum*. Hence there muſt

be

be units of which, taken collectively, numbers are composed, and it is these numbers, when so composed, that are called matter.

I willingly resign the divine Plato, the divine Aristotle, and all the heroes of scholastic philosophy. They were men who had recourse to words to conceal their ignorance. Their disciples have believed in them because of their reputation; and whole ages have been satisfied to speak of without understanding them. We are no longer permitted to use words but in their proper meaning. M. Wolf gives the definition of each word, regulates the use to which it is to be applied, and, having defined his terms, he prevents numerous disputes which often arise from a play of words, or from the different ideas annexed to them by the persons who employ them.

Nothing can be more true than what you say of metaphysics; yet, I confess my curiosity and desire of novelty are so great, that I cannot forbear to study subjects which highly interest me, and which attract my attention by their very difficulties.

You tell me, in the politest manner possible, that I am a stupid animal*. This indeed I

* *Une bête.* This is a pun, and signifies either fool or beast, in French; like the word ass, in English. T.

previously

previouſly ſuſpected; I now begin to be convinced it is truth. To ſpeak ſeriouſly, you are in the right. What is the vaunted reaſon of man, by which he ſo proudly profits? What is the poſſeſſor of this reaſon? Men, that they might live in ſociety, have been obliged to chooſe ſuperiors to themſelves, and to make laws to inform each other that robbery and murder are acts of injuſtice. Theſe reaſonable men go to war in the ſupport of vain arguments, which they do not comprehend. Theſe reaſonable men have a hundred different religions, each more abſurd than the other. Theſe reaſonable men love to live, yet complain of languor, and the duration of time, while they do live. Is there any reaſon in all this?

The diſcoveries of mathematicians may be objected, and the calculations of Meſſrs. Bernoulli and of Newton. But were theſe people more reaſonable than others? They paſſed their whole lives in ſearch of algebraic proportions, and the relations of numbers, and drew no profit from the ſhort duration of their exiſtence.

How much do I approve the philoſopher who wiſely unbends in the arms of Emily! I am well perſuaded I ſhould infinitely prefer her acquaintance to that of the centre of gravity, the

ſquaring

ſquaring of the circle, the aurum potabile, and the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

You ſpeak, ſir, like an intelligent man, on what regards the princes of the north, who indubitably have great obligations to Luther and Calvin (poor creatures in other reſpects) who have freed them from the yoke of prieſts, and have very conſiderably increaſed their revenues, by the ſecularization of eccleſiaſtical ſtates. Their religion however is not purified from ſuperſtition and bigotry. We have a ſect of *The Beatified*, who do not ill reſemble the preſbyterians of England, and who are ſo much the more inſupportable becauſe they are bitter and inflexibly ſtiff toward all who are not of their opinion. We are obliged to conceal our ſentiments that we may not unſeaſonably raiſe up enemies. Such a man has neither faith nor truth * is a common proverb, and in the mouth of every body, and is of itſelf worth the deciſion of a council. You are condemned without being heard, and perſecuted without being known; beſide, to attack the received religion of a country, is to attack the ſelf-love of man in its laſt retreat, which makes him prefer his own faith,

* *Cet homme n'a ni foi ni loi.*

without

without knowing why, to any foreign creed, and to every objection that can be alleged.

On the ſubject of Bayle, I, ſir, think like you; Jurieu, who perſecuted him, forgot the firſt duty of religion, which is charity. Bayle beſide appears to me the more eſtimable becauſe he was of the ſect of the academics, who did nothing more than ſimply relate both ſides of the queſtion, without raſhly deciding on ſubjects the properties of which cannot be diſcovered by man, except that they are unfathomable.

I think I ſee you at table, with your glaſs in your hand, remembering your friend. It is more flattering to me that you ſhould drink my health than to ſee temples, ſuch as were erected for Auguſtus, riſe up to my memory. Brutus was ſatisfied with the approbation of Cato, and I with the ſuffrages of a ſage. How powerfully do you aid my own ſelf love! To this I inceſſantly oppoſe the friendſhip you have for me. But how difficult is it to do ourſelves juſtice; and how carefully ought we to guard againſt that vanity to which we find ourſelves ſo naturally inclined!

My little ambaſſador will ſoon depart, provided with a letter of credit, and a portrait you are ſo determined to poſſeſs. His journey has been delayed by military occupations. He is

like the Meſſiah who is announced; I continually ſpeak of him, but he never comes. I beg you will commit every thing to his care which you wiſh to confide to my diſcretion.

I am,

With the moſt perfect eſteem, &c.

LETTER XXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1737.

I RECEIVED the letter of the philoſophic prince, dated May the 14th, and am informed there is a large parcel for me, at the houſe of the ſieur du Breuil Tronchin of Amſterdam. This parcel probably contains the ſecond part of the metaphyſics. Inimitable prince, every thing is within your ſphere. I am to your royal highneſs as a circle infinitely ſmall, included within a circle infinitely great; all the lines of the circle infinitely great terminate at the centre of the infinitely ſmall circle, but how vaſt the difference between their circumference! I delight in every thing in which your genius delights; but I ſcarcely can approach that which you perfectly

attain. I perceive not only the protector of M. Wolf, but a mind equal to his own. I will venture to addreſs myſelf to this mind.

You are pleaſed to tell me that a being like man cannot be finite and infinite at the ſame time, for that would imply a contradiction. True, he cannot be finite and infinite at the ſame time; but phyſically he may be a finite being, and geometrically infinitely diviſible. This infinite diviſibility is nothing more than the impoſſibility of aſſigning the laſt indiviſible point, and this impotence is what men call infinitely ſmall; as is that which, from a ſimilar kind of impotence, they call infinitely great, when ſpeaking of the extent of ſpace.

Let us, for example, take a unit. 1 is finite; but take $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{16}$, &c. and you will never exhauſt this ſeries. It is nevertheleſs true, that ſuch a ſeries of one-half, one-fourth, one-eighth, one-ſixteenth, taken collectively, would be equal to the unit. This I imagine to be the whole ſecret of the infinitely ſmall.

Aſſume, in the ſame manner, the infinitely great, and it is certain that the numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, &c. will never approach infinity; but take theſe numbers collectively and diſtinctively,

diſtinctively, and their ſum total is equal to infinitude.

This is the method of mathematicians. They have demonſtration with them, from which there is no appeal.

Thus, therefore, there is no contradiction between theſe two propoſitions; the unit 1 is finite, and the ſeries $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, equal to that unit is infinite.

Theſe truths, theſe mathematical demonſtrations, do not in any manner prevent ſuch things as undivided beings in nature, beings which are units, atoms, and without which the world could not be organized. It is very true that matter is compoſed of the undivided, becauſe unalterable beings are neceſſary for the formation of germs, which are ever the ſame; for the elements of mixed beings would not be elements, if they were combined. Thus, it is exceedingly true, that the principles of things are ſubſtances, hard, ſolid, and undivided; but are theſe principles, therefore, indiviſible? I by no means perceive ſuch a conſequence.

If they were again divided, the univerſe would not be what it is; but it is very evident they are diviſible, becauſe they are material; they have ſides.

While the elements of fire water, and air,

ſhall be what they are, undivided, they will ever be the ſame. Nature changes not, but the author of nature may divide them.

We have now to comprehend how, according to M. Wolf, matter can be compoſed of ſimple beings without extent. This is an idea which the poverty of my mind never can acquire. I am in expectation of the ſecond part of the metaphyſics which your royal highneſs has deigned to preſent to me, and I hope this ſecond part will give me wings, that I may mount toward the ſimple being. My wretched heavineſs continually ſinks me toward the being of extent.

When ſhall I obtain wings to fly and pay my reſpects to a being the leaſt ſimple, the moſt univerſal which exiſts on earth; to your royal highneſs?

The marchioneſs du Chatelet impatiently expects the amiable man whom Frederic calls his friend, the Hephæſtion of another Alexander.

At length, ſir, I am about to put your goodneſs to the proof, and to take the liberty of giving employment to your beneficent character. I earneſtly requeſt a favour from the philoſophic prince.

I know not how it happened, but, ſome years ſince, I found myſelf prompted to write a kind of

of hiſtory of the man who was half Alexander, half Don Quixote, the ſo famous Charles XII. of Sweden. M. Fabrice, who had been ſeven years in his ſervice, the envoy of France, the envoy of England, and a colonel in his army, furniſhed me with memoirs. Theſe gentlemen might very well be miſtaken, and I felt how difficult it was to write the hiſtory of a contemporary. The very perſons who were ſpectators of the ſame events all ſaw them in a different point of view. Witneſſes contradict each other; it is neceſſary that they ſhould all be dead before the hiſtory of a king ſhould be written; like as, at Rome, before any ſaint is inſerted in the calendar, his miſtreſſes, his creditors, his footmen, and his pages are all entombed.

I may add, I reproach myſelf with having ſcribbled two volumes on one man, when I remember that man was not you.

I particularly bluſh for having ſpoken of ſo many battles, which ſo many evils brought on mankind; and my repentance has been increaſed when I have been told, by ſome officers, that, in ſpeaking of theſe battles, I have not ſpoken truth; or, in other words, I have not ſpoken of their regiments. They imagined I ought to have written *their* hiſtory.

I ſhould have done better to have avoided

the details of battles fought with the Sarmatians, and to have made a more accurate enquiry of all the good which the Czar had done, in behalf of humanity. I eſteem a ſquare league of waſte land, clear and cultivated, much above a whole plain, heaped with the dead.

A new edition of my trifles in proſe and verſe has been begun, and it ſeems to me theſe trifles might become more uſeful, were I to give an abridgment of the great things which Charles XII. and the uſeful ones which the Czar Peter performed.

I have no memoirs of Muſcovy in my retreat at Cirey. Philoſophy, the belles lettres, peace, and felicity inhabit there; but we receive no news whatever from Ruſſia.

I caſt myſelf at the feet of your royal highneſs, and intreat you would kindly engage ſome well informed ſervant whom you may have in Muſcovy, to anſwer the queſtions here annexed. I ſhall have the obligation to your royal highneſs of having been made better acquainted with the truth, which is a very uncommon traffic between princes and private perſons. But you do not reſemble other princes in any reſpect. From others men aſk wealth and honours; you are the only one from whom they aſk information.

Solomon

Solomon of the north, the queen of Sheba, that is to ſay of Cirey, joins me in every ſentiment of admiration.

LETTER XXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, May 25th, 1737.

SOME man renown'd, ſome hero, or ſome ſage,
Might well have founded thoſe abodes you bleſs;
But 'twas an honour not to Remus due,
Much rather to ſome kindred ſpirit worthy Rome.
Braving his proud republic, Scipio came,
(The firſt who Carthage conquer'd) Rome abjuring,
The conſcript thunder, and th' ungrateful herd,
And hither brought that valour which had been
Of Rome the ſtay, the terror, and the pride.
In exile Tully hither fled, and eloquence,
Auguſt in Roman garb, with ev'ry art
That can the mind adorn and captivate,
His ſteps attended. Ovid wander'd here,
And taught a ſcience more enchanting ſtill;

Taught how to love and how to make love
known.
Theſe were the founders of your noble domes;
From theſe deſcended, and by theſe inſpir'd,
The Smiles, and Loves, and Pleaſures wait
your will,
Obedient erſt to them. Where you are there
is Rome.
Fall'n is the firſt; 'tis only holy now.
Nor will I thither ſtray to pay my vows;
To Remuſberg my pilgrimage ſhall be.

This, ſir, is what I think of Mount Remus; I am in all things deſtined to differ much in opinions from monks. Your two capuchin antiquaries, who, according to their own account, had been ſent by the pope to examine whether the brother of Romulus had built your palace, ought certainly to have made a ſaint of this Remus, being unable to make him the founder of the royal abode. Remus apparently would have been as much aſtoniſhed to ſee himſelf in Paradiſe as in Pruſſia.

We impatiently wait, in the little paradiſe of Cirey, the arrival of two things very uncommon in France, the portrait of a prince like you, ſir, and of M. von Kayſerling, whom your royal highneſs

highneſs honours with the name of your intimate friend.

Louis XIV. one day, ſaid to a man who had rendered great ſervices to Charles II. of Spain, and who had lived familiarly with him—The king of Spain, then, loved you much?—Ah! ſire, replied the poor courtier, who is it that you kings love?

And are you, ſir, determined to poſſeſs all the virtues which it is ſo vainly wiſhed kings ſhould poſſeſs, and for which they are ſo continually receiving falſe praiſe? Is it not enough to be ſuperior to other men in underſtanding, and in rank, but will you exceed them in ſenſibility?—A prince and a friend!—Here are two words united which hitherto had been ſuppoſed incompatible.

I, however, have continually ventured to believe that none but princes could feel pure friendſhip; for private perſons, in general, who pretend to be friends, are rivals; there is continually ſome cauſe of conteſt between them; fame, places, women, and eſpecially the favours of you lords of the earth, for which they diſpute more than for women themſelves, who, however, are at leaſt your equals in worth.

But it ſeems to me that a prince, and eſpecially a prince like you, having nothing to contend for,

for, and being without fear of rivalſhip, may without embarraſſment, and wholly at his eaſe, feel affection for his friend. Happy the man who is allowed to participate the bounties of a heart like yours! M. von Kayſerling can have nothing to wiſh: what aſtoniſhes me is to think that he ſhould travel.

Cirey, alſo, ſir, has a ſmall temple dedicated to friendſhip. Madame du Chatelet, who I can aſſure you poſſeſſes all the virtues of a great man with all the graces of her ſex, is not unworthy of his viſit, and ſhe will receive him as the friend of prince Frederic.

Be perſuaded, ſir, that there will never be any other portrait at Cirey than yours. We have here a ſmall ſtatue of Cupid, under which we have placed *noto Deo*; and below your portrait we ſhall put *ſoli principi*.

I am exceedingly angry with myſelf that, in my letters to your royal highneſs, I never ſend you any news of the French literature, concerning which you condeſcend to intereſt yourſelf; but I live in profound retirement, with one of the moſt amiable ladies of the preſent, and with books of the paſt age. It ſeldom happens that novelties which deſerve to be ſent to Mount Remus arrive at this retreat.

I know not whether it be from a want of encouragement,

ragement, whether the French, after having discovered the good in the age of Louis XIV. have the misfortune at present to seek what is better than good, or whether in all countries Nature slumbers and seeks repose after great efforts, like the earth after an abundant harvest; but the belles lettres are greatly on the decline among us.

The most useful part of philosophy to men, that which regards the soul, will never be of any worth among us, so long as we are not allowed to think freely. There is a certain number of superstitious people here, who do great injury to all truths. Were Cicero alive, and were he writing his tract *de Natura Deorum*, or his Tusculan Disputations, or were Virgil to say,

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!

Cicero and Virgil would run great risks. The Jesuits only are allowed to say what they please; and, if your royal highness has read what they have said, I doubt whether you will do them so much honour as to M. Rollin. The historian to write well should live in a free country, but most of the French refugees, in Holland

Holland and in England, have forgotten the purity of their mother tongue.

With reſpect to our univerſities, they have little merit except that of their antiquity. The French poſſeſs no Wolf, no Maclaurin, no Manfredy, no s'Graveſande, no Muſchenbroek. Our profeſſors in philoſophy, in general, are not worthy to ſtudy under the perſons above cited. The academy of ſciences very well ſuſtains the honour of the nation; but the light it emits is not ſufficiently expanſive. Each academician confines himſelf to particular views. We neither poſſeſs any good phyſics nor aſtronomical principles for the inſtruction of youth, but are obliged for theſe to have recourſe to foreigners.

The opera is ſupported becauſe muſic is the faſhion; but unfortunately that muſic cannot, like the Italian, be the delight of all nations. Comedy is abſolutely on the decline. A propos of comedy, I am exceedingly mortified that ſome perſon has ſent your royal highneſs the Prodigal Son. In the firſt place the copy you have is not my real work, and in the ſecond, the true copy is but a ſketch which I have neither time nor inclination to finiſh.

I ſpeak to your royal highneſs with that open ſimplicity which perhaps is too much my character; I tell you what I think of my nation, without

without wiſhing to praiſe or to contemn; and I believe that the French live rather upon credit in Europe, like a wealthy man who inſenſibly is waſting his patrimony. Our nation requires to be encouraged by the eye of the maſter: for my own part, ſir, I require nothing more than a continuation of the kindneſs of prince Frederic. I want nothing but health; did I poſſeſs that, I would labour hard to preſerve this kindneſs; but he who has but little health and little genius is a poor man.

I am,

With profound reſpect, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Naven, May 25th, 1737.

I HAVE provided Ceſario with every thing requiſite for his expedition to Cirey. He will give you the portrait you were ſo determined to poſſeſs. Nothing but the unfortunate

materiality

materiality of my body could prevent me from accompanying him *.

Cesario had the misfortune to be born in Courland. The baron von Kayserling, his father, is court-marshal to the duke of Courland, but he is the Plutarch of this modern Bœotia. I recommend him to you with all possible earnestness. Confide in him entirely, he has the uncommon advantage of being both a prudent and a witty man. On seeing him depart I shall exclaim,

Too highly favour'd ship that Virgil bear'st
To blest Athenian shores, &c. †

Could I feel envy it would be at the journey which Cesario is preparing to take. The only thing that consoles me is the idea of seeing him return, like the chief of the Argonauts, who brought back the treasures of Colchos. What will be my joy when he shall give me the Maid of Orleans, the reign of Louis XIV. the New-

* The original reads, Nothing but the unfortunate materiality of my body could prevent my *mind* from accompanying him. T.

† Navis, quæ tibi creditum
Debes Virgilium; finibus Attici, &c.
Hor. lib. i. od. 3.

tonian philoſophy, and the other unknown wonders which you have not yet thought proper to make public! Do not deprive me of this conſolation. Will not you, who ſo ardently deſire the happineſs of mankind, contribute to make me happy? An agreeable book, in my opinion, conſtitutes a great part of true happineſs.

It is but juſt that you ſhould aſſure the Venus-Newton of my attentions toward her. Science never could find a better abode than in the perſon of a lovely woman. What philoſopher could reſiſt her arguments? While conducted by philoſophy ſo amiable, reaſon would ever be our guide. For my own part, I greatly fear the gilded arrows of the little Cytherean god.

Ceſario will inform you of the perfect eſteem I have for you; he will tell you how highly we honour your virtue, merit, and talents. I entreat you will confide in whatever he ſhall ſay to you from me, and be aſſured it is impoſſible to ſpeak too highly of the conſideration with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Ruppin, July 6, 1737.

WERE I a poet I ſhould have replied in verſe to the charming ſtanzas your laſt letter contained, but reviews, journies, cholic and fever, have ſo far interrupted my rhyming vein that Phœbus remains inexorable to the prayers I offer; he refuſes to inſpire me with his fire divine.

"To Remuſberg alone I wiſh to go."

The pleaſure this line gave me was great indeed! I read it over and over above a thouſand times. A genius of your rank, a man free from prejudice, and whoſe lively imagination is ſubordinate to his reaſon, would indeed be a very uncommon apparition in this country. What happineſs could equal mine, could I improve my mind by communicating with yours, and ſee myſelf guided, under your care, on my road to the beautiful!

I give you the hiſtory of Remus for no more than it is worth. The origin of nations is generally

generally fabulous, and proves nothing more than the antiquity of colonies. Let us rank the anecdote of Remus with the hiſtory of the holy phial, and the magic of Merlin.

Capuchin antiquaries ſhall never be either my hiſtoriographers or the directors of my conſcience. How different is your manner of thinking from that of theſe ſupporters of error! You love truth, they ſuperſtition; you practiſe the chriſtian virtues, they remain ſatisfied with teaching them; they detract, and you pardon. Were I a catholic I would neither chooſe Saint Francis of Aſſiſe nor Saint Bruno for my patron; I would proceed immediately to Cirey, where I ſhould meet with virtues and talents ſuperior in every reſpect to thoſe of the hair-cloth and the frock.

The kings, without friendſhip and gratitude, of whom you ſpeak, ſeem to me to reſemble the log which Jupiter ſent down to be the king of the frogs. I am unacquainted with ingratitude, except from the evil which it has done me. I can even affirm, without affecting ſentiments which are not natural to my heart, I would renounce every kind of grandeur, did I think it incompatible with friendſhip. You have a large ſhare in mine. Your candour, and the ſincere and noble confidence whichyou teſtify for me,

on all occaſions, well merit I ſhould beſtow on you the title of friend. I wiſh you were appointed profeſſor to princes, that you might teach them to be men; might teach them to feel, and make them underſtand the true value of grandeur, and how much it is their duty to contribute to the happineſs of mankind.

My poor Ceſario has been ſtopped ſhort by the gout; he has rid himſelf of it as well as he was able, and is now on his road for Cirey. You will judge whether he does not merit all the friendſhip I feel for him. When taking leave of my little friend, I ſaid to him, recollect that you are going to an earthly paradiſe, to an abode a thouſand times more charming than the iſland of Calypſo, that the goddeſs of theſe haunts will not cede in beauty to the enchantreſs of Telemachus, that you will find in her thoſe ornaments of the underſtanding which are ſo preferable to the graces of the body, and that this miracle employs her leiſure in the ſearch after truth. You will there ſee the human mind in its laſt ſtage of perfection; wiſdom without auſterity, ſurrounded by the tender Loves and the Smiles.

Here you will contemplate the ſublime Voltaire, will admire the amiable author of the Mundane; the man who is able to raiſe

himſelf to the level of Newton, and who, without ſinking, can ſing of Phillis, metamorphoſed into a marchioneſs. What art ſhall we uſe to induce thee, my dear Ceſario, to forſake a dwelling ſo delightful! How feeble will the ties of former friendſhip be, when ſtruggling againſt ſo many attractions!

I put my intereſt into your hands, ſir; it is for you to reſtore me my friend; perhaps he is the only mortal worthy of becoming a citizen of Cirey; but recollect he is my all, and that it would be a crying injuſtice to ſnatch him from me.

I hope my little ambaſſador will return loaded with your golden fleece; that is to ſay your Maid of Orleans, and ſo many other half promiſed, and ſtill more impatiently expected pieces. You know the pleaſure I take in your works is unalterable, therefore ſhould you refuſe me this pleaſure, the cruelty would be the greater.

It does not ſeem to me that a depravity of taſte is ſo general in France as you ſuppoſe. The French ſtill have their Apollo at Cirey, can boaſt of their Fontenelle, their Crebillon, and their Rollin, for perſpicuity and beauty in the hiſtorical ſtyle; of their Olivet for tranſlation, and of Bernard and Greſſet, whoſe eaſy and poliſhed verſes may very well replace thoſe

of Chaulieu and La Fare. Though Greſſet may ſometimes ſin againſt accuracy, the fire by which he is hurried away well may plead his excuſe; full of his thoughts, he neglects his words. How few of nature's works are complete, and how ſeldom do we meet with Voltaires! I had almoſt forgotten M. de Reaumur, who, as an experimental philoſopher, has acquired great reputation here.

Theſe appear to me to be the quinteſſence of your great men; the remainder do not ſeem very worthy of attention. The belles lettres are no longer rewarded, now, as they were in the time of Louis the Great. This monarch, though ill informed, made it an affair of moment to protect thoſe from whom he expected immortality. He loved fame; and to that noble paſſion France is indebted for her academy, and the arts by which ſhe is ſtill adorned.

With reſpect to metaphyſics, I do not believe they can make their fortune any where but in England. You have your bigots, and we have ours. Germany is not deficient either in ſuperſtitious or fanatic perſons, enamoured of their prejudices, who are malignant to exceſs, and who are the more incorrigible becauſe their ignorance is ſo ſtupid that it interdicts the uſe of reaſon. It is very certain we have good cauſe

to be prudent in the company of ſuch people. A man who has the character of being deſtitute of religion, though he were the moſt worthy man on earth, is generally decried. Religion is the idol of the people, and whoever dares to touch it with hand profane, draws down their hatred, and is held in abomination by them.

I am infinitely delighted with Cicero; I diſcover many ſentiments in his Tuſculan Diſputations conformable to my own. I would not however adviſe him to affirm, were he now alive——"To die may be an evil, but to be "dead is nothing."——In a word, Socrates preferred hemlock to the conſtraint of keeping ſilence; but I know not whether there be any pleaſure in becoming the martyr of the error of another. The moſt certain of the things we poſſeſs in this world is life, and this it ſeems to me every reaſonable man ought to endeavour to preſerve.

I can aſſure you, I deſpiſe the Jeſuits too much to read their works; the evil propenſities of the heart in them every where eclipſe the qualities of the mind. Our life is beſide ſo ſhort, and our memories are in general ſo defective, that we ought only to ſeek inſtruction where the pureſt knowledge is to be found.

I ſend you on the preſent occaſion the hiſtory of the Virgin of Czenſtochow, by M. de Beauſobre. I hope you will be pleaſed with the turn and the ſtyle of that piece. As far as I am a judge, I have not remarked any crimes committed againſt the purity of language. This it is true is a thing much neglected by moſt of the refugees, though I believe there are ſome among them, to be found, who would not be reprehended by the academy.

Your univerſities, and our academy of ſciences, are at preſent in a mournful ſtate. It ſhould ſeem the Muſes wiſh to deſert theſe climes. Frederic I. king of Pruſſia, who was a prince of very confined genius, but well diſpoſed and docile, cauſed the arts to flouriſh under his reign. He delighted much in grandeur and magnificence, and was liberal even to profuſion. Feeling emulation at all the praiſes which he heard beſtowed on Louis XIV. he imagined that by chooſing this monarch for his model, he could not fail in like manner to be praiſed. The court of Berlin was ſoon ſeen to ape that of Verſailles; the imitation extended to every thing; ceremonies, harangues, the ſtately ſtep, the meaſured phraſe, tall muſketeers, light horſe, &c. Permit me

to

to ſpare you the trouble of reading a long deſcription.

Queen Charlotte, the conſort of Frederic, was a princeſs who, added to all the gifts of nature, had received an excellent education. She was daughter to the duke of Lunenburg, afterward elector of Hanover. This princeſs had been intimately acquainted with Leibnitz, at the court of her father, who had taught her the principles of philoſophy, and particularly of metaphyſics. The queen highly reſpected Leibnitz; ſhe kept up a correſpondence with him, and this occaſioned him to make frequent journeys to Berlin. The philoſopher naturally was a lover of all the ſciences, and was acquainted with them all. M. de Fontenelle, ſpeaking of him, very wittily ſays that, by decompoſing him, materials enough might have been found to have formed ſeveral men of learning. The attachment Leibnitz had for the ſciences never ſuffered him to loſe ſight of an endeavour to procure their eſtabliſhment. He conceived the deſign of inſtituting an academy at Berlin, on the model of that at Paris, introducing however ſome trifling changes. He communicated his purpoſe to the queen, who was charmed with it, and promiſed to aid him with all her influence. Care was taken to in-

troduce the name of Louis XIV. The aſtronomers affirmed they ſhould diſcover an infinity of ſtars, of which the king was to be the godfather; the botaniſts and phyſicians dedicated their talents to him. How was it poſſible to reſiſt ſuch various perſuaſion! The effects accordingly became evident; an obſervatory was preſently conſtructed, an anatomical theatre was opened, and the academy, being formed, found Leibnitz its protector.

During the life of the queen, the academy was pretty well ſupported; but not ſo after her death. The king her conſort did not long ſurvive. New lords new laws: the arts at preſent daily wither, and I behold knowledge flying from us with tears in my eyes, and arrogant ignorance and barbarous manners uſurp their place.

The drooping laurel, in our barren fields,
Now withers in neglect; ſay why, ye gods,
Muſt this my native land remain depriv'd
Of ſcience, arts, and heaven-deſcended fame?

The judgment I have paſſed on *the Prodigal Son** I believe to be juſt; I find verſes in it which are immediately known for yours; but

* *L'Enfant Prodigue.*

there

there are others which appear to me rather to be produced by a ſcholar than a maſter.

We are indebted to the French for the revival of ſcience. After cruel wars, the propagation of chriſtianity, and the frequent invaſions of barbarians had given a mortal blow to the arts which had fled from Greece into Italy, ſome ages of ignorance paſſed on, at the end of which the torch again began to burn in France. The French removed the briars and thorns which had almoſt forbidden men the purſuit of fame, by the ſtudy of the belles lettres. Surely it is but juſt that other nations ſhould preſerve the remembrance of the obligation they owe the French, for the ſervice which has been thus generally rendered. Ought not our gratitude toward thoſe who give us life, and thoſe who furniſh food for the mind, to be equally ſtrong?

The defect of the Germans is not a want of underſtanding. They conſiderably approach the Engliſh in character; they are laborious and profound. Having once ſeized on a ſubject, they dwell upon it, and the prolixity of their writings is eternal: could they be corrected of their heavineſs, and a little familiarized to the graces, I ſhould not think it impoſſible for my nation to produce great men.

There is one difficulty, however, which will continually

continually prevent us from having good books in our language; and this consists in our not having any fixed use of words. Germany is divided among so many princes that no means ever can be found to induce them to submit to the decisions of an academy. Our men of learning, therefore, have no other resource than that of writing in foreign languages; and as it is exceedingly difficult perfectly to possess these, it is much to be feared our literature will never make any great progress.

There is another difficulty not less than the former. Princes generally despise the learned. The little care which the latter take of their dress, the dust of the study with which they come loaded, and the small relation that can exist between a head stored with good authors and the empty brains of courtiers, occasion princes to mock at the exterior of the learned, while the great man escapes their glance. The judgment of the prince is too much respected by his grandees for them to think proper to be of a different opinion, and they in like manner affect to contemn persons a thousandth part of whose worth they do not possess. *O tempora! O mores!*

For my own part, feeling that I am not formed for the age in which I live, I content myself

myſelf with not imitating the example of my equals: I inceſſantly preach to them that pride is the pinnacle of ignorance, and, acknowledging the ſuperiority of you great men, I hold you worthy of my praiſe, and you in particular, ſir, of my eſteem; this is entirely your own. Regard me as a diſintereſted friend, for whoſe acquaintance you are ſolely indebted to your own merit.

I ever remain,

SIR,

Your very affectionate friend.

Written with one foot in the ſtirrup, and on the point of departing. I ſhall be back in a fortnight.

LETTER XXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, July, 1737.

I AM ſurrounded by the benefits you have conferred on me. The baron von Kayſerling, the portrait of your royal highneſs, the ſecond part of the metaphyſics of M. Wolf, the diſſertation

tation of M. de Beauſobre, and eſpecially the charming letter which you have deigned to write me from Rupin, dated July the 6th; theſe all are here; and with theſe I may brave the fever and the languor which prey upon me. I perceive it is poſſible to be in pain and yet to be happy.

Your amiable ambaſſador is no longer troubled with the gout. We are ſoon to loſe him; he came only to be regretted; he returns to the prince whom he loves, and by whom he is beloved, and leaves at Cirey an eternal remembrance of himſelf, and of the well-confirmed reign of Frederic. He brings my tribute with him: all I had to give I have given. It is ſaid there are tyrants who ſtrip their ſubjects, but good ſubjects voluntarily ſtrip themſelves for their ſovereign's ſake.

I have, therefore, loaded my packet with all I have written of the hiſtory of Louis XIV. with ſome detached pieces of poetry, which have been printed at the end of the Henriade in a very incorrect manner, and ſome ſcraps of philoſophy. While packing up my thoughts I could not help thus exclaiming to myſelf—

Advent'rous wight, too vain and too ſecure,
Wilt thou the glance of genius dare endure?

Dull

Dull bird of night, to twilight gloom consign'd,
What! Flutter in the rays that strike thee
blind *!

Thy prince, added I, loves, understands and cultivates all the arts, from music to true philosophy. He is particularly acquainted with the great art of pleasing, and if to his other virtues he did not add that of indulgence, the baron von Kayserling would not be loaded with so enormous a packet.

In fine, sir, you have inspired me with that which princes so seldom inspire—with the utmost confidence.

I was desirous of adding the Maid of Orleans to the tribute I have paid, but your ambassador will inform you the thing was impossible. This little work has been for near a year in the possession of the marchioness du Chatelet, who will not part with it. The friendship with which she honours me will not permit her to venture any thing which might eternally separate us. She has renounced the whole world to live with

* To obviate the blame which might be incurred for the very bold liberty here taken, a *literal* translation of the verses is annexed. "Poor trifling genius, wilt thou dare to appear "before this immortal genius? To be worthy of thy master, "thou shouldst be universal; and this thou hast not the ho-"nour to be." T.

me,

me, in the bosom of solitude and studious contemplation. She knows that the least knowledge which should be obtained of the work would indubitably raise a storm. She fears every accident; she is not ignorant that the baron von Kayserling was kept sight of at Strasburg, and that he will be the same on his return; that he is watched, and that he may be searched; and she is well convinced you would not hazard the misery of your two subjects of Cirey for a few jokes in rhyme.

Your royal highness would perceive this trifling poem is written in a very different style from the history of Louis XIV. and the Newtonian philosophy, *sed dulce est desipere in loco.* Woe to the philosophers who never can unwrinkle their brows. I regard austerity as a disease, and would a thousand times rather be languid, as I am, and subject to fever, than infected with gloom of mind. In my opinion, virtue, cheerfulness, and study, are three sisters, which ought never to be asunder. These three deities are your humble servants and my mistresses.

Metaphysics constitute a great part of the immensity of your knowledge. I, therefore, have not hesitated to submit my doubts to you, on this subject, and to request from your royal hands

hands a ſmall ball of thread, as a clue to guide me through the labyrinth. You cannot imagine, ſir, how much conſolation it affords madame du Chatelet and myſelf to ſee you think thus like a philoſopher, and endowed with the virtue that deteſts ſuperſtition. Ignorance, and the want of knowing that prieſts were their greateſt enemies, have been the cauſe that moſt kings have encouraged fanaticiſm in their ſtates.

Does hiſtory, in fact, afford a ſingle example of prieſts who have promoted concord between monarchs and their ſubjects? Do we not, on the contrary, every where perceive that prieſts have ſet up the ſtandard of diſcord and revolt? Did not the preſbyterians of Scotland begin the civil wars which ended in the death of Charles I. a king who was a man of worth? Was it not a monk who aſſaſſinated Henry III. of France? Is not Europe ſtill full of the traces of eccleſiaſtical ambition, and is not this ſufficiently proved by biſhops who are become princes, nay electors, and by a Romiſh prieſt treading on the necks of emperors?

For my own part, when I recollect the exceſs, the debility, and the phrenzy of mankind, I am continually aſtoniſhed that during the ages of ignorance the popes did not attain univerſal monarchy.

I am

I am perſuaded that, at preſent, the power of the ſovereign would, of itſelf, be ſufficient to ſtifle all the ſeeds of religious fury, and eccleſiaſtical diſcord, in a kingdom. Nothing more is neceſſary to effect this than to be a worthy man, and no bigot. Men, fooliſh as they are, have an internal conviction of the ſuperiority of virtue to devotion. A devout king forms none but hypocrites; a virtuous one forms men like himſelf.

I have dared to think aloud in the preſence of your royal highneſs, for your divine character encourages me to take every liberty. I have juſt ended a converſation with the baron von Kayſerling, who has increaſed my admiration of and inflamed my zeal toward you. It is my misfortune to have a conſtitution which will probably prevent me from being a witneſs of the good you will do to men, and of the high examples you will afford them. Happy thoſe who ſhall live in times ſo fortunate! Others ſhall more nearly inſpect the fame and the felicity of your government. I, however, ſhould have enjoyed the bounties of a philoſophic prince, have taſted the firſt-fruits of his great mind, and have been but too happy, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

To wonders, wonders adding ſtill, Voltaire,
Thy vigils thou doſt conſecrate to man,
Whoſe mind, not ſatisfied that thou canſt charm,
Thou wouldſt exalt, enlighten, and enlarge.
Great Newton's ſyſtem having ſimplified,
Its depth diſplay'd before th' aſtoniſh'd view,
Swift and prodigious in thy flight behold
The ſtandard of Melpomene's uprear'd!
Thither th' enraptur'd paſſions breathleſs throng.
Quitting the poniard, and anon the maſk,
With maſter ſtroke hiſtoric thou doſt trace
The Swediſh hero, and the northern Czar;
Their vices, virtues, and illuſtrious acts;
Of this the rigid labours and the laws *;
Of that the fame, the frenzy, and the fall †;
And by the parallel, to conquerors fearful,
Doſt indicate to kings the path of true renown.

For me, a native of the climes which dare,
Deſpiſing prejudice, to do thee right,

* Peter I. † Charles XII.

How much I marvel at thy various verſe,
Thy ſcientific lore, and all the gifts
The bounteous gods upon thy head have ſhow'r'd!
Let Slander, ſerpent-tongu'd, her venom ſhed,
To blaſt the laurel blooming on thy brow;
Or let the furious Beſſus of Bruſſels *
Eject his poiſon far as the fartheſt Loire,
Be yet my ſimple voice (the voice of truth)
Of future immortality the pledge.

Where, ſir, do you find time for your labours? Either your hours are equivalent to the days of others, or your fortunate and fertile genius ſurpaſſes that of moſt great men. Scarcely have you ended interpreting the philoſophy of Newton, before you are induſtrious to enrich the French theatre with a new tragedy, and this play, which according to appearance is ſcarcely yet off the ſtocks, is already, as it were, followed by a new work which you project.

You are willing to do the Czar the honour of writing his hiſtory like a philoſopher. Not ſatisfied with having ſurpaſſed all your predeceſſors by the elegance, the beauty, and the utility of your works, you are deſirous likewiſe of ex-

* J. B. Rouſſeau, the calumniator of Saurin, and a traitor to his friends.

ceeding

ceeding them in numbers. Eager to ſerve the human race, you conſecrate your whole life to the public good. Providence has kept you in reſerve, to teach men to prefer the lyre of Amphion, which built the walls of Thebes, to thoſe warlike inſtruments which threw down the ramparts of Jericho. The teſtimony beſtowed by ſome truths diſcovered, and ſome errors deſtroyed, is, in my mind, the fineſt trophy which poſterity can erect to the glory of a great man. To what may you not pretend; you, who are as faithful in the worſhip of truth as you are zealous in the deſtruction of prejudice and ſuperſtition!

You expect, no doubt, to receive, by this conveyance, all the neceſſary materials to begin the work on which you intend to labour. What will be your ſurpriſe at receiving only metaphyſics, and ſome verſes? Theſe, however, were all I was this time enabled to ſend you. A prolix treatiſe on metaphyſics, and an indolent copyiſt, do not, when they meet, go far of a day.

I have read your forcible mathematical reaſoning on the infinitely ſmall with much attention; and I think we only differ in the manner of expreſſing ourſelves. I ingenuouſly own to you I have no idea of infinitude; and I further

own that I am only acquainted with two ſpecies of numbers, equal or unequal numbers. Yet the infinite, being a number, is neither equal nor unequal. What is it then? If I have well underſtood you, it is your opinion, as it alſo is mine, that matter, relative to man, is infinitely diviſible; becauſe it is in vain that men would attempt to decompoſe matter; they never can arrive at the units of which it is formed; but that in reality, and with reſpect to the eſſence of things, matter muſt neceſſarily be compoſed of a maſs of units, which are the ſole principles of matter, and which the author of nature has thought proper to conceal. Therefore, whoever ſhould ſpeak of matter without the idea of theſe units, joined and arranged together, would uſe a word without a meaning. The modification of theſe units afterward determines the differences between beings.

Wolf is perhaps the only philoſopher who has dared to give a definition of the ſimple being. We have no knowledge of things which do not fall under the obſervation of our ſenſes, or which we cannot expreſs by ſigns; nor can we obtain any intuitive knowledge of units, becauſe we never ſhall acquire inſtruments ſufficiently fine to be able to ſeparate matter to ſuch nice exceſs. The preſent difficulty is to know how

we

we may explain a thing which never has been ſubjected to our ſenſes. It was abſolutely neceſſary to give new definitions, different in all reſpects to any thing that relates to matter.

To come at this definition, Wolf has prepared us by that which he has given of ſpace and extent. If I am not miſtaken, he explains himſelf thus.

"Space is the void which exiſts between the "parts, inſomuch that every being which has "pores occupies ſpace between them. Now, "all compoſite beings muſt have pores, ſome "more apparent than others, according to "their different compoſition: therefore, all "compoſite beings contain a ſpace. But a unit, "not having parts, and conſequently not having any interſtices, or pores, it will reſult that "it cannot partake of ſpace."

Extent is called by Wolf the continuity of beings. A line, for example, can only be formed by an arrangement of units which touch each other, and which may be continued in a curve, or in a right line. Thus a line has extent; but one being, one, which is not continued, cannot occupy extent. I again repeat, extent, according to Wolf, is only the continuity of beings. A moment's reflection will lead you to hold theſe definitions to be ſo true that you will not

be able to refuſe your aſſent. I only requeſt a tranſitory glance, which is ſufficient, ſir, to elevate you, not only to the ſimple being, but, to the higheſt degree of knowledge which the human mind can attain.

I have juſt ſeen a perſon of Berlin with whom I have had a long converſation concerning you; I mean our envoy Borck, who is returned from England. He has very much alarmed me concerning the ſtate of your health. He is never weary of ſpeaking of the pleaſure he has taken in your converſation. The mind, he aſſerts, is triumphant over the infirmities of the body.

You ſhall be ſerved like a philoſopher, and by philoſophers, in the commiſſion of which you have judged me capable. I immediately wrote to my friend in Ruſſia; he will anſwer with truth and preciſion to thoſe points on which you wiſh for intelligence. Not ſatisfied with this, I have lately unearthed a ſecretary of the court, who is but juſt returned from Muſcovy, after a continued abode of eighteen years. He is a man of great good ſenſe, a perſon of knowledge, is in the ſecrets of their government, and of undoubted veracity. I have enjoined him to give an anſwer to the ſame queſtions. I fear that, in quality of a German, he may abuſe the privilege of prolixity, and that, in-

ſtead

ſtead of a memorial, he will write a volume. As ſoon as I receive any thing that relates to the ſubject I will ſend it with all diligence.

As a reward for all my labours, I only require a copy of the new edition of your works. I am too much intereſted in your fame not to be informed among the firſt of your new ſucceſs.

According to the deſcription you have given me of the proſpect of Cirey, I imagine I only read the deſcription and hiſtory of my own retreat. Remuſberg is a little Cirey, except, ſir, that we have neither a Voltaire nor a madame du Chatelet.

I here ſend you another little ode, inſipid enough, and ſufficiently ill written. It is an apology for the goodneſs of God; the fruit of my leiſure, the inclination of ſending you which I could not reſiſt. Might I, if it be not to abuſe thoſe precious moments of which you make ſo marvellous a uſe, intreat you to correct it? I have had the misfortune to love poetry, and to write it as ill as one might wiſh; but the thing which ought to diſguſt me, and certainly would repulſe any reaſonable perſon, is the very ſpur by which I am impelled. I ſay to myſelf, little caitiff, though thou haſt hitherto met with no ſucceſs, yet take courage, have recourſe to the poliſhing tool, and again apply thyſelf to

the work. I thus, by being myſelf inflexible, hope to obtain favour from Apollo.

In the flower of my youth, an amiable lady inſpired me with two paſſions at once; you will eaſily imagine the one was the paſſion of love, the other the paſſion of poetry. This little miracle of nature, with every poſſible grace, was poſſeſſed of taſte and delicacy. Theſe ſhe wiſhed to communicate to me. In love I was ſucceſsful enough, and ill enough in poetry. From that time I have been tolerably often a lover, and always a poet.

Should you be acquainted with any ſecret to cure mankind of this mania, you will really do a chriſtian-like act to communicate it to me; if not, I condemn you to teach me the rules of that enchanting art which you have embelliſhed, and which is, in return, ſo honourable to you.

We princes always have intereſted motives, nor do we ever form any acquaintance without having ſome private views, which directly regard our own profit.

Oh! how happy is Ceſario! How delicious muſt the moments have been which he has paſſed at Cirey! for where are the pleaſures which are equal to thoſe of the imagination? I have made very ſtrenuous efforts to accompany him, though

though but in fancy; but this fancy was neither ſufficiently glowing, nor was my mind ſufficiently at its eaſe to be ſucceſsful. Do you, ſir, remain ſatisfied with theſe efforts, while to me it ſhall ſuffice that I have converſed with you by the intervention of my friend.

I am enraptured with the kindneſs which madame du Chatelet has teſtified for Ceſario; it would increaſe my eſteem for this lady were the thing poſſible. The wiſdom of Solomon would have been well rewarded had the queen of Sheba reſembled her of Cirey. For my own part, I have not the honour either to be a ſage or a Solomon; I think myſelf highly honoured in the friendſhip of a perſon ſo accompliſhed as the marchioneſs du Chatelet. I have reaſon to believe that a ſight of her would inſpire me with ideas ſomewhat different from thoſe which the vulgar name ſage. I flatter myſelf, as you have the happineſs of a more intimate acquaintance with that goddeſs, you will have ſome indulgence for my foibles, if it be any foible too much to admire the perfections of nature.

From philoſophical argument here do I find myſelf inſenſibly engaged in an abortive declaration of love; and while, in my metaphyſics, I confine myſelf to the ſtyle of Wolf, my morality ſomewhat reſembles that which Rameau has

rendered more enthuſiaſtic, by the ſweetneſs of his harmony.

In what relates to friendſhip, I hope you will confide in my conſtancy. Difficult in determining to give my heart, having given it, I never repent of the act. I am, with all that eſteem which you more than any perſon merit,

SIR,

Your very affectionate friend.

LETTER XXVIII.

SIR, Renuſberg, Auguſt 27th, 1737.

CESARIO has tranſported me in imagination to Cirey, of which he has given me a moſt charming deſcription. I am particularly delighted with the aſſurance which he has given me that you exceedingly ſurpaſs the high idea I had formed of you.

It ſeems you are both confined by illneſs, ſo that poor Ceſario is not permitted to enjoy any perfect pleaſure in this life. Your fever affords me an opportunity of ſpeaking to you on a ſubject concerning which I am greatly intereſted, I mean

I mean your health. I moſt earneſtly intreat you would not work too hard. The ſtudies and labours of the mind are infinitely prejudicial to the health of the body. It is your duty to take care of yourſelf, a duty which my friendſhip for you impoſes. I eſteem it one of the moſt fortunate accidents of my life to have been born the contemporary of a man of ſuch diſtinguiſhed merit; but this good fortune will be imperfect, ſhould you not continue to be mine, and ſhould I not one day have the ſatisfaction to ſee you.

You ſend me your works which to me are invaluable, and make my gratitude unbounded. I intreat, ſir, you would tell the divine Emily how very highly I eſteem her. I know not how to teſtify the ſenſe I have of the manner in which ſhe has received my little plenipotentiary.

You are both worthy of my admiration, but at preſent you rob me of my heart.

Could I be envious, I certainly ſhould be ſo of Ceſario; I would willingly endure his gout might I but have ſeen and heard that which he has ſeen and heard. Antiquity, while it vaunts of its wonders of the world, repreſents them as at a great diſtance from each other; but at Cirey we find two wonders whoſe worth is highly ſuperior to thoſe maſſes of ſtone, which, in themſelves,

ſelves, poſſeſs no virtue. The maſculine and permanent underſtanding of a woman, and the glowing, the univerſal, yet continually regular genius of a poet, appear to me more miraculous.

Your gratitude is by no means indebted to me for doing you nothing more than juſtice; I wiſh, ſir, to teſtify my eſteem for you by more ſolid marks than by portraits. At preſent be ſatisfied with theſe types, and wait the accompliſhment of the future. I ever remain,

SIR,

Your very affectionate friend,

LETTER XXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, September 27, 1737 *.

WERE I writing to an ungrateful perſon, I ſhould be obliged to make him comprehend by a tedious deſcription what gratitude is; fortunately for me this is not my caſe. My letter is addreſſed to one who is an example of virtue, to one who will underſtand me exceedingly

* The Berlin edition dates September the 20th.

ingly well when I ſay nothing more than that I am very ſenſibly affected by the obligations which I am under to him.

Ceſario, who is acquainted with my eagerneſs for every thing which comes from you, has ſent me your two letters, reſerving to himſelf the pleaſure of remitting me the remainder of your immortal works. Were there any thing which could redouble my impatience to ſee him once more, it would undoubtedly be the precious treaſure of which he is the keeper.

Your works ſhall be preſerved as the works of Ariſtotle were by Alexander: they ſhall be continually preſent with me, and in them I expect to poſſeſs a whole library. They are the honey which you have collected from the ſweeteſt flowers, and which has loſt nothing by having been gathered by you.

While you exiſt, ſir, I would ſend only to Cirey in queſt of truths. I will neither trouble the ice hills of Nova Zembla, nor the ſandy deſerts of Ethiopia, to gain intelligence of the figure of the earth. Theſe are diſcoveries which certainly merit praiſe; far from blaming them, I find them worthy of the labour of thoſe by whom they have been undertaken; but your impartial and judicious manner of conſidering things appears to me infinitely more profitable.

I learn

I learn more from your doubts than from all which the divine Ariſtotle, the ſage Plato, and the incomparable Deſcartes, have ſo inconſiderately affirmed.

To diſencumber ourſelves of prejudices, or to acquire new information, is equally progreſſive in philoſophy: the one enlightens, the other informs. The higheſt pleaſure any reaſonable man can enjoy in this world is, in my opinion, the diſcovery of new truths. I expect to reap an abundant harveſt in your metaphyſics. Madame du Chatelet robs me of wealth already poſſeſſed, and wreſts it from the hands of my friend. What a ſubject for an elegy! It will however proceed no further, *for he had too good a heart.* Do not therefore expect to hear any reproach. I only intreat you would tell the divine Emily that my mind communicates its complaints to hers of the darkneſs which ſhe prevents you from diſſipating.

Loſt in the gloom of obſcure metaphyſics, I waited for a few words, under your hand, to gain new light; but a bright ſtar which is your guide, the charming and divine Emily, wiſhes to enjoy the whole fruit of your labours; yet let me intreat you to permit that philoſophy by which I ſhall certainly profit to viſit this peaceful retreat.

How

How much am I charmed to perceive the age of Oreſtes and Pylades again reſtored at Cirey! You afford an example of virtue which, till this time, never, alas! exiſted—except in fable. Fear not, ſir, that I ſhould trouble the philoſophic ſweets of your repoſe; were it in my power to render thoſe divine ties by which you are united more durable, I would willingly offer you my aid. Once in my life, I have myſelf experienced ſhipwreck; Heaven defend me from conducing to the ſhipwreck of others!

I believe, however, I have found an expedient by means of which you may, without riſk, and without diſturbing the tranquillity of Emily, ſatisfy my curioſity. This, ſir, will be to communicate ſome paſſages from your metaphyſics, diſperſed through your letters, every time you ſhall do me the pleaſure to write to me. The confidence I have in you, added to the ardour of inſtructing myſelf, occaſion me to be thus importunate. Heaven has beſide endowed you with too many talents to conceal them. It is your duty to enlighten the human race; you are not a miſer of your knowledge, and I am your friend.

My Ruſſian correſpondent has yet ſent me no intelligence concerning that which you wiſh to

know; I hope however ſhortly to give you ſatisfaction.

The prieſts will certainly never chooſe you for their panegyriſt; your reflections on eccleſiaſtical power are too juſt, and they are ſupported by the irrevocable teſtimony of hiſtory. Does not their ambition originate in their being forbidden to practiſe any other vice? Men have forged to themſelves a ſtrange phantom of auſterity and virtue; they have required prieſts, who are partly impoſtors and partly bigots, to conform to this caprice; they are not openly allowed either to be lechers or drunkards; but they are not forbidden to be ambitious, and ambition of all the paſſions has the moſt fearful crimes and diſorders in its train.

This brings to my mind the monkey of Cleopatra, which had been taught to dance exceedingly well; but, ſome one taking a fancy to throw down ſome nuts, the monkey, forgetting his dreſs, his dancing, and the part he was playing, immediately ſeized on his prey.

A prieſt acts virtue, as long as virtue and his intereſt agree; but nature, on the ſmalleſt occaſion, burſts through the cloud, and the crimes and vices which the appearance of virtue concealed are then diſcovered. That an eccleſiaſti-

cal

cal monarchy could be eſtabliſhed on ſo precarious a foundation is truly aſtoniſhing.

The authority of the prieſts of paganiſm originated in their falſe oracles, their ridiculous ſacrifices, and their impertinent mythology. How grave were the tales of Daphne changed into a laurel; the virgins pregnant by Jupiter, and who brought forth deities; the god who quitted Olympus, his thunder, and his bolts, to come and inhabit the earth in the form of a bull, that he might elope with Europa; the reſurrection of Orpheus triumphant over hell; and, in fine, an infinite number of abſurdities and puerile narratives, which, at the beſt, were only capable of amuſing children.

Men, however, who delight in the marvellous, have at all times addicted themſelves to ſuch chimeras, and have venerated thoſe by whom nonſenſe was defended. Might we not well diſpute the reaſon of man, after having proved how little reaſonable men are?

I am charmed with your philoſophy. There can be no doubt, ſir, but that every thing ought to conduce to the happineſs of mankind. And in effect, where is the uſe of enquiring into the length of the life of a flea; or whether the rays of the ſun penetrate the waters of the ocean deeply; or to diſpute concerning the ex-

iſtence of the ſoul of an oyſter? Cheerfulneſs renders us gods, auſterity demons. Such auſterity is a kind of avarice, which deprives men of that happineſs which they might otherwiſe enjoy.

Poor Tantalus may ſwim, but muſt not drink!

Nature, no doubt, repenting of having made a being too happy in this world, has ſubjected you to ſo many misfortunes. I am greatly alarmed and diſturbed by your fever. I fear to loſe *Solum hominem*, my maſter, who guides and inſtructs me. Yes, with reaſon, I fear to loſe a man who ſingly is of more worth than his whole nation.

Nature, by continued labours, becomes a better artiſt. She has formed your brain from the model of all the great originals which ſhe had produced in all ages. It is to be feared ſhe will remain ſatisfied with this her maſter-piece. Be certain, ſir, your life is as precious to me as my own.

Oh ſhould that cruel moment e'er be ſeen
That cuts thee from my ſight for ever; Gods!
For ever! No, I could not long ſurvive:
An hour ſo dreadful ſhould be diſtant far.
Earth wants thy aid, and Emily thy love;
May'ſt thou be ſpar'd, and may my death ſuffice.

I am,

I am, with the ſincereſt friendſhip, and all that eſteem which ſupreme merit and virtue extort even from the envious, and receive as willing homage from the worthy,

SIR,

Your very faithful and affectionate friend.

LETTER XXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, October, 1737.

IT is really afflicting that Cirey is ſo far diſtant from the throne of Remuſberg. Your benefits and your commands are tedious in their travels. On the 10th of October, I received a letter dated the 16th of Auguſt, full of poetry, excellent morals, good metaphyſics, ſuperior ſentiments, and a philanthropy which enchants me.

Wherefore, ſir, are you a prince? Why can you not, at leaſt for a year or two, deſcend to the ordinary rank of men? We ſhould then have the happineſs to ſee you, which, ſince you have deigned to write to me, is the only good on earth I want. You are like the God of

Abraham, of Iſaac, and of Jacob; you commune with the faithful by the miniſtry of angels. You ſent us the angel Ceſario, but he is too ſoon returned toward his native heaven. We have beheld you in your ambaſſador, but to ſee you face to face is a happineſs we are denied. This is for none but the elect of Remuſberg.

Our little paradiſe at Cirey preſents its very humble reſpects to your empyrean, and the goddeſs Emilia bows before *Gott-Frederic*. Well, after a thouſand delays I have received this excellent letter, the ode, and the third part of the metaphyſics of Wolf. Here once again are benefits which other kings, thoſe poor mortals who are nothing more than kings, are incapable of beſtowing.

I muſt remark, concerning theſe metaphyſics, that they are a little too prolix, too full of commonplace obſervations, but in other reſpects admirable, well connected, and often very profound. I cannot however but ſay, ſir, I am wholly in the dark reſpecting this *ſimple being* of Wolf. I perceive myſelf whirled into a country in which I cannot breathe, on ground where I have not the power of moving, and among people whoſe language I do not underſtand. Could I flatter myſelf that I did underſtand this language, I, perhaps, ſhould be bold enough to contend

with M. Wolf; though, be it underſtood, with great reſpect. For example, I ſhould at once deny his definition of extent, which according to this philoſopher is the continuity of beings. Pure ſpace is extent, and has no need of other beings. If M. Wolf denies pure ſpace, we are in this caſe of different religions; he muſt continue to be of his own, and I of mine. I am tolerant, and hold it to be exceedingly right that each perſon ſhould think as he pleaſes, though he ſhould think contrary to me; for whether there be a plenum or a vacuum is of little importance, and I certainly have a plenitude of eſteem for M. Wolf.

I never can ſufficiently pay the thanks I owe your royal highneſs; you again have deigned to promiſe me an account of what the Czar has done for the good of mankind. In this you are highly intereſted, for it is an example which you ought to ſurpaſs, and a theme on which I ought to write. You are born to command men more worthy of you than the ſubjects of the Czar. You poſſeſs every thing which this great man wanted; particularly you poſſeſs humanity, with which he had the misfortune not to be acquainted.

Adorable prince, the ſtate of my health is continually languid; but if I wiſh to live it is that I may be a witneſs of what you ſhall act.

I earneſtly deſire to find Lucretius in an error, and my ſoul immortal, that I may hear your praiſes, either above, below, or I know not where, and ſhould I then have ears they will certainly hear that you have realized the motto of our little exhibition of fireworks at Cirey, *Spes humani generis*.

To crown your benefactions, ſir, you have ſent me a new ode, written by yourſelf. Thus Cæſar, while young, employed his leiſure. He, Auguſtus, and moſt of the good emperors, were poets; I might even cite bad princes, but I do not wiſh to diſhonour poetry.

You have acted very rightly, great prince, to exerciſe your genius in an art which extends to all things; and, ſince you have done the French language the honour of ſtudying it ſo well, you will find no mode more excellent of teaching you to ſpeak it with energy, than that of putting your thoughts into verſe; for the very eſſence of poetry is to ſay more, and ſay it better, than in proſe. I have a ſecond time taken the liberty very ſcrupulouſly to examine your work; I dare venture to tell you my opinion on the leaſt things, and, however perfect a knowledge you may have obtained of the French language, there are certain turns which no genius can divine, as well as certain

modes

modes of ſpeaking, which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed among us. It is ſometimes impoſſible to diſtinguiſh the word which belongs to proſe from that which poetry may admit; and that which will be ſufferable in one kind, from that which is inſufferable in the other. Theſe are errors I daily commit, when I write in Latin. True it is your royal highneſs is infinitely better acquainted with the French than I am with the Latin language; yet there is continually ſome ſmall apoſtrophe, ſome accent, omitted; and with your good leave I will make ſuch trifling corrections.

To my remarks on your ode, I here add ſome ſtanzas, in which, rigoroufly purſuing your ideas, I have clothed them in other language; and I have only been guilty of this temerity, that you may yourſelf deign to re-write my verſes, ſhould you condeſcend to apply your leiſure moments to render your ode perfect.

I know you have the noble ambition of endeavouring to excel in whatever you undertake. You have been ſo ſucceſsful in muſic that there would be ſome difficulty, at preſent, for you to find a muſician who ſhould ſurpaſs you. We have juſt been playing ſome of your muſic; your portrait hangs over the harpſichord. Thus, great prince, are you formed to enchant all the ſenſes.

Oh! How happy muſt thoſe be who approach your perſon, and how much reaſon has M. von Kayſerling to love you! On his arrival, we all of us judged of the ambaſſador by the prince, and of the prince by the ambaſſador. Other princes have ſubjects only; you, ſir, have only friends and in this you peculiarly excel.

Happineſs I find is ſeldom pure and unmixed. Your royal highneſs ſends me the letters of a great man, and the works of a ſage; and you know that the road is long, which theſe treaſures muſt travel. M. du Breuil remits the packets to a friend, who has correſpondents, and this occaſions many delays. You have rendered me avaricious and impatient; and I, like other courtiers, am inſatiable for new favours. Will you, ſir, make trial of M. Thiriot, who will remit the packets to me from Paris to Cirey by a certain conveyance? Accept, ſir, with your uſual goodneſs, every ſincere proteſtation of the profound reſpect, the tender, the inviolable attachment, the eſteem, the paſſion, in fine all the ſentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, October 24th, 1737.

ADMIRATION, respect, gratitude, and, suffer me once more to repeat, the tender attachment I feel for your royal highness, have dictated all my letters, and occupied my heart. At present the most poignant grief is mingled with these sentiments. I here send you an extract of a letter which I have just received from a man as much attached as I am to your royal highness. This extract will speak more powerfully than any language of mine *.

As I have no knowledge of the thing in question, except from the letter of M. Thiriot, I can only demonstrate to your royal highness the greatness of our present affliction. You can inspect the subject more closely, and you alone can

* As the misunderstanding between the prince royal and the king had become public, it was very natural that the enemies of M. de Voltaire should accuse him, being the friend of the prince, of writing whatever appeared against the king, especially since the calumny would be as injurious to the prince as it was to Voltaire.

tell

tell how it is beſt to act. I could wiſh that the author of ſuch a libel ſhould ſuffer exemplary puniſhment. Probably, however, the culprit has been protected by the contempt which is attendant on an act ſo infamous; for his meanneſs and obſcurity may doubtleſs have been his protector. Perhaps the king, your father, has not ſeen this wretched performance. The abuſe of the vulgar ſeldom reaches the ears of kings; and, if it ſhould be heard, it is but the buzzing of inſects, which is uſually diſregarded, becauſe it neither can injure nor offend. An obſcure fellow may write a puniſhable ſatire, but cannot offend a ſovereign. When any wretch is mad enough to libel a king, it is not the king whom he injures, but the name of the perſon under which he conceals himſelf to give his libel popularity. The clemency of your father might pardon the ſatire, but his juſtice would not ſuffer the calumniator to remain in peace were he known.

I own, ſir, for my own part, that I am as ſenſibly afflicted as if I had been accuſed of having perſonally offended your royal highneſs. Is not any want of reſpect to the king equal, in effect, to an attack upon you perſonally? Perhaps the writing I mention is unknown; perhaps it has been known, and has already been condemned

condemned to the fate of all ill-written libels, that of being ſoon forgotten; but I thought it was my duty to ſend you this information.

Permit me to add, ſir, that, in the moments of relaxation which my ill health affords, it is my endeavour to render myſelf leſs unworthy of your goodneſs, by continuing to ſtudy thoſe arts you protect, and which you yourſelf condeſcend to embelliſh. I regard the life which your royal highneſs leads as the model of private life; but ſhould you ever aſcend the throne, kings then ought to do what we do at preſent (we, inſignificant as we are) they ought to make you their example.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet is as ſenſible of the honour of being remembered by you as ſhe is worthy of that honour. Her mind is the counterpart of yours. We are formed to be your ſubjects. I am perſuaded that, were you carefully to examine your titles, you would find the marquiſate of Cirey was anciently dependent on Brandenburg. This is more certain than the foundation of Remuſberg by Remus.

We remain in doubt whether the packet of October addreſſed to your royal highneſs, and the other for your amiable ambaſſador, are ſafely arrived.

I am,

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and with the moſt inviolable, moſt tender, affection, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, October, 1737.

I RECEIVED the laſt letter which your royal highneſs did me the honour to write, dated September 27th. I am very anxious to know whether the packet I ſent, as well as that which was addreſſed to M. von Kayſerling, are ſafely come to hand; they were dated about the beginning of the month of Auguſt.

You command me, ſir, to give you ſome account of my metaphyſical doubts, and I take the liberty to ſend you an extract of a chapter on freedom. Here your royal highneſs will, at leaſt, find candour, though you ſhould at the ſame time diſcover ignorance. Would to God that all the ignorant were equally ſincere!

Perhaps the love of humanity, by which all my thoughts are actuated, has led me aſtray in this work: perhaps my opinion that there would neither

neither be virtue nor vice, punifhment nor reward, and that fociety, efpecially among philofophers, would be an intercourfe of malice and hypocrify, did not man poffefs full and abfolute freedom; perhaps, I fay, this opinion has carried me too far. But, fhould you difcover errors in my thoughts, condefcend to pardon them, for the love of the principle in which they originated.

I always endeavour to make my metaphyfics conform to morality. I have fincerely, and with all the attention of which I am capable, examined whether I could obtain any ideas of the human foul, and have found that the fruit of all my refearches is ignorance. I difcover that it is nearly the fame with this thinking, free, and active principle as with God himfelf. My reafon tells me God exifts, but this fame reafon informs me I cannot know what God is. In effect, how fhould we underftand what the foul is, when, if we happen to be born blind, we cannot form any idea of light. I therefore perceive with grief that every thing which has been written concerning the foul is unable to teach us the leaft truth.

My principal end, after having groped round this foul to divine its fpecies, has been an endeavour to regulate it, for it is the fpring of our watch.

watch. All the fine ideas of Deſcartes concerning elaſticity teach me nothing of the nature of this ſpring. I ſtill remain ignorant of the cauſe of its elaſticity; however, I wind up the watch, and it keeps going, well or ill.

I examine man. Be the materials of his compoſition what they may, it is neceſſary to be convinced whether he partake of vice or of virtue. This is the moſt important point with reſpect to man. I do not mean with reſpect to any particular ſociety, living under ſuch and ſuch particular laws, but with reſpect to the whole human race; as it relates to you, ſir, who are to be a king; as it relates to the woodman in your foreſts, the Chineſe doctor, or the American ſavage. Locke, the moſt ſage of the metaphyſicians with whom I am acquainted, ſeems, while rationally denying innate ideas, to think there is no univerſal moral principle; and here I will dare to combat or rather to interpret the ſuppoſition of this great man. I allow, with him, there are, in reality, no innate ideas; and it evidently follows that there is no innate moral propoſition in our ſouls; but does it follow, becauſe we are born without a beard, that, inhabitants as we are of the old continent, our beards will not grow at a certain age? We are not born able to walk, but all who are born with two legs

will

will walk ſome day or other. In the ſame manner no perſon is born with an idea that it is neceſſary to be juſt, but God has ſo conſtructed the organs of man that we all, at a certain age, are agreed in this truth.

It appears evident to me that God meant we ſhould live in ſociety; like as he has given bees inſtinct, and the proper inſtruments to make honey. Our ſociety would not be able to ſubſiſt without the ideas of juſt and unjuſt; he therefore has given us the power to acquire theſe ideas. True it is that our different cuſtoms will never permit us all to annex the ſame ideas to the term juſt. What is a crime in Europe would be virtue in Aſia; ſo ſome German diſhes do not pleaſe the gluttons of France; but God has formed both French and Germans in ſuch a manner that they both love good cheer. Thus all ſocieties have not the ſame laws, but no ſociety lives without laws. Hence we find the good of ſociety is uniform among men, from Pekin to Iceland, as the immutable rule of virtue. Whatever is uſeful to ſociety will every where be good. This ſingle idea at once conciliates all the contradictions which ſeem to exiſt in the morality of mankind. Theft was permitted at Lacedemon; but why? Becauſe all things were there in common, and to ſteal

from a miſer who hoarded only for himſelf that which the law gave to the public was to ſerve ſociety.

It will be ſaid there are ſavages who are cannibals, and who yet think they act properly. I anſwer that theſe ſavages have the ſame opinion as we have of juſt and unjuſt. They, like us, make war in fury, and from paſſion. The ſame crimes are every where committed; to eat the enemy is but an additional ceremony. The evil is not to put them on the ſpit, but to kill them; and I will venture to affirm there is no ſavage who thinks he does well to murder his friend. I ſaw four ſavages brought from Louiſiana into France in 1723, and among them was a woman of a very mild temper. I aſked her, by the aid of an interpreter, if ſhe had not ſometimes eaten the fleſh of her enemies, and if ſhe had not taken pleaſure in the taſte. She anſwered in the affirmative. I then demanded whether ſhe would willingly have killed or cauſed to be killed one of her own countrymen, that ſhe might eat him. She ſhuddered while ſhe anſwered, and the horror ſhe conceived againſt ſuch a crime was viſible.

I defy the moſt determined liar among travellers to dare to affirm that there is any tribe, or family, among whom it is permitted to break a promiſe

a promiſe. I have good reaſon to believe that God has created certain animals to graze in common; others to be ſeen generally in pairs, and not in greater numbers; ſpiders to weave their webs; and that he has given to each ſpecies the neceſſary inſtruments for the works they are to perform. Man has received all that is requiſite to live in ſociety; like as he has received a ſtomach to digeſt, eyes to ſee, and a ſoul to judge.

Place two men upon earth, and whatever is good for them both they will call good, virtuous, and juſt. Place four, and nothing will be virtuous which is not agreeable to all the four. Should any one of the four eat the ſupper of his companion, or beat, or kill him, the others would ſurely riſe againſt the act. What I have ſaid of theſe four men may be ſaid of all. Such, ſir, is nearly the plan on which I have written my moral metaphyſics; but when virtue is the queſtion is it for me to ſpeak in your preſence?

What are your feeble claims from earth,
Or what the throne, your due by birth?
From worth and virtue you derive
What crowns and ſceptres ſhall ſurvive;
From heav'n you drew that heritage
Which makes the man and forms the ſage.

My off'rings to your ſhrine I ſhould not bring,
Were you not ſomething greater than a king.

Be you the judge, great prince, of my opinions, for your mind is the tribunal to which my opinions appeal. Your royal highneſs inſpires me with a deſire for life, that my eyes may one day behold the Solomon of the North! But I fear I ſhall not be ſo happy as the good old Simeon. We never paſs your portrait without repeating our hymn which begins,

Hope we for happineſs on earth!

I wait for your deciſion on the hiſtory of Louis XIV. and on the elements of the Newtonian philoſophy. Should the tribute I have paid be accepted with kindneſs, I hope my recompenſe will be to receive inſtruction.

I intreat your royal highneſs to deign to ſend me, by ſome ſafe conveyance (which I believe that of M. Thiriot to be) the memoirs you have had the goodneſs to promiſe me concerning the Czar. Not that I renounce poetry; it delights me more than ever, ſir, ſince you have become a poet. I hope ſoon to ſend you ſomething which may be repreſented on the theatre of Remuſberg. I am highly angry that any one ſhould have preſented your royal highneſs with the wretched manuſcript of *The Prodigal Son*, which

which is in your poſſeſſion, and which reſembles my piece as much as a monkey reſembles a man. I know no better alternative than that of printing it in my juſtification.

I have no terms ſufficient to thank your royal highneſs for all your bounties. With what generoſity, I had almoſt ſaid tenderneſs, have you deigned to intereſt yourſelf concerning me! You write to me as Horace ſpoke to Mæcenas, and you are both Mæcenas and Horace. The marchioneſs du Chatelet, who participates my admiration, and whom you have permitted to join me in reſpect, profits by this permiſſion. I am, with the moſt profound regard, and the moſt tender gratitude, &c.

On the Freedom of the Will.

THE queſtion of freedom is the moſt intereſting of any we can examine, ſince we may affirm that on this queſtion all morality depends. A thing ſo intereſting well deſerves that I ſhould depart a little from my ſubject, to enter into the preſent diſcuſſion, and to place before the reader the principal objections which

have been made againſt freedom, that he may himſelf be able to judge of their value.

I know that freedom has very illuſtrious foes; I know that reaſons have been alleged againſt it which, at a firſt view, may ſeduce; and it is theſe reaſons that have actuated me to ſtate and to refute them.

This ſubject has been rendered ſo confuſed that it is abſolutely neceſſary to begin by defining what is underſtood by freedom, when we wiſh to ſpeak of it ſo as to be underſtood ourſelves.

I call freedom the power of thinking on a thing or not thinking, of moving or of not moving, conformable to the choice which the mind ſhall make. All the objections of thoſe who deny freedom may be reduced to four principal ones, which I ſhall examine each after the other. The tendency of the firſt objection is to render the teſtimony of our conſcience, and the interior feeling we have of freedom, doubtful. They pretend that we only imagine we have the intimate feeling of freedom, for want of paying attention to what paſſes within ourſelves; and that, when we aſſiduouſly reflect on the cauſes of our actions, we, on the contrary, find they are all determined by neceſſity.

That, further, we cannot doubt but that there are

are motions in our bodies which do not depend on the will; ſuch as the circulation of the blood, the palpitation of the heart, &c. Anger, alſo, or any other violent paſſion, often carries us out of ourſelves, and cauſes us to commit actions which our reaſon diſapproves. So many viſible chains, with which we are ſhackled, prove, according to them, that our bondage in every other reſpect is ſimilar.

Man, ſay they, is ſometimes carried away by impulſes, the agitation and violence of which he feels: at others, he is conducted by a gentle motion which he does not perceive, but by which he is in like manner overcome. He is a ſlave who does not continually feel the weight of his galling chains, but who is not therefore the leſs a ſlave.

This reaſoning reſembles the following. Men are ſometimes ill, they are therefore never well. Is it not, on the contrary, a proof that he who feels his illneſs, and his ſlavery, has once been healthy and free?

In a ſtate of drunkenneſs, when hurried away by any violent paſſion, or when there is any ſubverſion of our faculties, &c. our freedom is no longer obeyed by our ſenſes, and we then are no longer free to uſe our freedom; like as

we are unable to move an arm which has been ſtruck dead by the palſy.

Freedom in man is the health of the ſoul. Few people enjoy that health in an entire and unalterable ſtate. Our freedom is feeble and bounded, like our other faculties; but we ſtrengthen it by accuſtoming ourſelves to meditation, and by conquering our paſſions; and this exerciſe of the ſoul renders it ſomething more vigorous. Yet, whatever efforts we may make, we never can ſubject all our deſires to our reaſon, and there ever will be in our ſoul, as in our body, ſome involuntary motions; for we are neither ſage, nor free, nor healthy, but in a very ſmall degree.

I know men may ſo twiſt and abuſe reaſon as to combat the freedom of animals, and to conceive them machines which neither poſſeſs ſenſation, deſire, nor will, though they have the appearance of them all. I know that ſyſtems, or, in other words, errors, may be forged to explain their nature. But, when we interrogate ourſelves, we ſhall be obliged to confeſs, if we are candid, that we have a will; that we have the power to act, to move our bodies, to apply our minds to certain thoughts, and to ſuſpend our wiſhes, &c.

The enemies of freedom, therefore, muſt allow

low that our interior ſenſations aſſure us we are free; and I will venture to affirm there is no perſon who really doubts of his own freedom, and whoſe conſcience does not riſe againſt the artificial ſentiment by which he would perſuade himſelf that all his actions are ſubject to neceſſity. Men, therefore, are not ſatisfied with denying this intimate conviction of being free, but they proceed ſtill further. Though it ſhould be granted you, ſay they, that you have an interior conviction of being free, ſtill it would prove nothing, for our feelings deceive us reſpecting our freedom, like as our eyes deceive us concerning the bulk of the ſun, when they teach us to imagine that the ſun's diſc is about two feet wide, although its diameter is, really, compared to the earth's diameter, as a hundred to one.

The following anſwer, I believe, may be given to this objection. The things here compared together are, in themſelves, very different. I cannot and ought not to ſee objects but in the direct ratio of their ſize, and in the inverſe ratio of the ſquare of their diſtance. Such are the mathematical laws of optics, and ſuch is the nature of our organs, that, if my ſight were able to perceive the real ſize of the ſun, I could not then perceive any object on earth; and ſuch a ſight, far from being uſeful, would be prejudicial to me. The ſame may be ſaid of the ſenſe

of hearing, or of ſmelling. I have not, and cannot have, theſe ſenſations more or leſs ſtrong (all other things in a like proportion) than according as the ſonorous or odoriferous bodies are at a greater or a leſs diſtance. God, therefore, has not deceived me by obliging me to ſee that which is far off of a ſize proportionate to its diſtance. But were I to believe myſelf free, and not to be ſo, God muſt have created me purpoſely to deceive me; for our actions appear to us free preciſely in the ſame manner as they would appear if we really were free.

Nothing more remains to thoſe who maintain the negative, except the mere poſſibility that we are ſo formed as to be always inevitably deceived reſpecting our freedom; and this poſſibility itſelf is only founded on an abſurdity, ſince the reſult of this perpetual illuſion, in which we ſhould be kept by God, would be that the Supreme Being acts in a manner highly unworthy of his infinite wiſdom.

Let it not be ſaid that it is unworthy of a philoſopher to have recourſe here to God, for the being of God having once been proved, as it inconteſtably is, he certainly is the author of my freedom if I am free, as he is the author of my error if, having made me a being purely paſſive, he has given me the irreſiſtible conviction

viction of a freedom which he has not in reality beſtowed.

This interior conviction, which we have of our freedom, is ſo ſtrong that nothing leſs is neceſſary, to make us doubt of it, than a demonſtration which ſhould prove that for us to be free would imply contradiction. Of ſuch demonſtrations there certainly are none.

Let us add to all theſe reaſons, which overthrow the objections of the neceſſarians, that they are obliged each moment to contradict their own opinion by their actions; for we ſhould in vain allege the moſt ſpecious reaſoning againſt our freedom, while we ſhould continue to act as if we were free, agreeable to that interior conviction of our freedom which is ſo deeply engraven in the heart, and which has, in deſpite of our prejudices, ſo much influence over our actions.

Driven into this intrenchment, thoſe who deny freedom would proceed to ſay—All which this internal conviction, on which you ſo loudly inſiſt, informs us of is that the motions of our bodies, and the thoughts of our minds, are obedient to our will; but this will itſelf is ever neceſſarily determined by that which our underſtanding judges to be the beſt; like as the beam of the ſcale is always turned by the greater weight.

The links of our chain are connected with each other after this manner.

Ideas, as well of ſenſation as of reflection, preſent themſelves to the mind with or without its conſent, for we do not form our own ideas. Thus, when two ideas preſent themſelves to the underſtanding, as for example the idea of going to bed, or the idea of going to walk, we abſolutely muſt make choice of one of the two, or reject them both. We therefore are not free, with reſpect to the act itſelf of willing.

It is further certain that, if we chooſe, we ſhall indubitably decide for ſleeping, or walking, according as the underſtanding ſhall judge the one or the other to be moſt uſeful and convenient. Now the underſtanding can only judge that to be good and convenient which appears ſo to be; there always are differences in the things, and theſe differences neceſſarily determine the judgment; for it would be impoſſible to chooſe between two indiſcernible things, if ſuch could be found *. All our actions, therefore, are neceſſary, ſince, according to this confeſſion, we continually act conformable to the will; and ſince it is proved—I. That our will is neceſſarily

* I ſuſpect the author meant two things exactly ſimilar, without difference, rather than indiſcernible. T.

determined

determined by the decision of the understanding; II. That this decision depends on the nature of our ideas; and, III. That our ideas do not depend upon ourselves.

As this argument, in which the enemies of freedom place their principal force, has several branches, so likewise it has several answers.

I. When it is said that we are not free with respect to the act of willing, that proves nothing against our freedom; for freedom consists in acting or in not acting, and not in willing or not willing.

II. It is affirmed our understanding cannot avoid judging that to be good which appears so to be, and that the understanding determines the will, &c. This reasoning is founded only upon making, unperceived by ourselves, distinct beings of the will and the understanding, which are supposed to act on each other, and afterward to determine our actions; but this is a mistake which need only to be perceived in order to be rectified; for we easily feel that to will, to judge, &c. are nothing more than different functions of our understanding. Again, to have perceptions, and to judge that a thing is true and reasonable, when we perceive that it effectually is so, is not an action but a simple passion: it is in effect to feel what we feel, and to see what we

see;

ſee; there is no connection between the approbation and the act, between that which is paſſive and that which is active.

III. The differences between the things are ſaid to determine our underſtanding. But thoſe who ſay ſo have not conſidered that the freedom of indifference, previous to the dictamen of the underſtanding, is a real contradiction in things which have abſolute differences between themſelves; for, according to this excellent definition of freedom, fools, idiots, and animals themſelves, would be more free than we are; and we ſhould be the more ſo the leſs ideas we had, for we ſhould leſs perceive the differences of things; that is to ſay in proportion as we ſhould be more ſilly, which is abſurd. If this be the freedom we want, I do not perceive any great reaſon we have to complain. The freedom of indifference in diſcernible things is therefore no real freedom.

With reſpect to the power of chooſing between things perfectly ſimilar, as we are acquainted with none ſuch, it is difficult to ſay what might then happen. I know not whether this power would be any perfection, but it is very certain that the ſelf-moving power, the only and true ſource of freedom, cannot be deſtroyed by the indiſcernibility of two objects; therefore, ſo

long

long as man ſhall poſſeſs this ſelf-moving power, man will be free.

IV. With reſpect to our will being always determined by what our underſtanding judges to be beſt, I reply, the will, that is to ſay the laſt perception or approbation of the underſtanding (for this is the ſenſe in which the word is underſtood in the objection) the will, I ſay, can have no influence on that ſelf-moving power in which freedom conſiſts. Thus the will is never the cauſe of our actions, though it be the occaſion of them; for an abſtract idea can have no phyſical influence over the ſelf-moving phyſical power which exiſts in man; and this power is exactly the ſame before and after the laſt deciſion of the underſtanding.

True it is that, morally ſpeaking, there is a contradiction in terms when we ſay a prudent being is guilty of ſome folly, and that conſequently he will certainly prefer that which his underſtanding judges to be the beſt; but there will be no phyſical contradiction in this, for phyſical neceſſity and moral neceſſity are two things which muſt be carefully diſtinguiſhed. The firſt is always abſolute, but the ſecond is only a contingency; and this moral neceſſity is exceedingly compatible with the moſt perfect natural and phyſical freedom.

The

The physical power of acting is therefore that which constitutes man a free being, be the use he shall make of it what it may; and the privation of this power would alike suffice to render him a purely passive being, in despite of his intelligence; for a stone which I should throw would not be the less a passive being, if it had an interior feeling of the motion which I communicated. In fine, to be determined by that which appears to us the best, is as great a perfection as is the power of doing that which we have judged to be the best.

We are able to suspend our wishes, and to examine that which seems to us the best, in order to have the power of choosing: this is a part of our freedom. The power of acting afterward conformable to this choice is what renders this freedom full and entire; and it is because we make an ill use of the power which we have of suspending our wishes, and because we determine with too much promptitude, that we are guilty of so many errors.

The more our determinations are founded on good reasons the more do we approach perfection; and it is this perfection, in a superior degree, which characterizes the freedom of beings more perfect than we are, and of God himself.

For here let it be well remembered that God

himſelf is only free after this manner. The moral neceſſity of acting always for the beſt is, in the ſame degree, greater in God, as a being infinitely perfect is ſuperior to man. The true and only freedom, therefore, is the power of doing that which we chooſe to do, and all the objections which are made againſt this kind of freedom are alike deſtructive of the freedom of God and of the freedom of man; conſequently ſhould it follow that man is not free becauſe his will is always determined by the things which his underſtanding judges to be the beſt, it muſt follow that neither is God free, and that all would be effect without cauſe in the univerſe, which is abſurd.

Thoſe perſons, if any there are, who ſhall dare to doubt of the freedom of God, muſt argue thus. God being infinitely wiſe is obliged, from a neceſſity in his nature, to will always the beſt: his actions, therefore, are all the reſult of neceſſity.

Three anſwers may be made to this argument.

I. We muſt begin by fixing what is the beſt, relative to God, and antecedent to his will, which, perhaps, will not be eaſily done. The argument, therefore, is reduced to ſay that God is under the neceſſity of doing that which ſeems to him the beſt, or, in other words, of executing

his

his will. Now, I aſk whether there be any other ſort of freedom, and whether to do that which we judge to be the moſt advantageous, and that, in fine, which pleaſes us, be not to be preciſely free.

II. The neceſſity of always acting for the beſt can only be a moral neceſſity, and a moral neceſſity is not an abſolute neceſſity.

III. In fine, though it be impoſſible for God, morally impoſſible, to derogate from his moral attributes, the neceſſity of always acting for the beſt, which is a neceſſary conſequence, is no more deſtructive of his freedom than the neceſſity of being omnipreſent, eternal, immenſe, &c.

Man, therefore, as an intelligent being, is under the neceſſity of willing that which his judgment ſhall tell him is the beſt. Were he otherwiſe, he muſt be ſubjected to the determination of ſome other being, and would no longer be free; for to will that which would not give pleaſure is an abſolute contradiction, and to do that which we judge the beſt, and which does give pleaſure, is to be free. We are ſcarcely able to conceive a being more free than one who has the power to do that which he pleaſes, and, ſo long as man ſhall have that freedom, he is as free as it is poſſible for freedom to make him, to ſpeak in the language of Locke.

The

The following argument may be called the Achilles of the enemies of freedom—God is omniſcient; the paſt, the preſent, and the future, are alike ſubject to his view. Now, if God know all I ought to do, I muſt abſolutely determine to act according to the manner in which he has foreſeen my actions. Therefore, I am not free; for if any future thing were a contingency, or an uncertainty, if it depended on the freedom of man, in a word, if it might or might not happen, it could not have been foreſeen by God; he, conſequently, could not be omniſcient.

There are ſeveral anſwers to this argument, which, at firſt, appears to be invincible.

I. The preſcience of God has no influence on the mode of the exiſtence of things. That preſcience does not impart any greater certitude to things than they would have had though preſcience had not exiſted; and, were no other reaſons to be diſcovered, the ſingle conſideration of the certitude of the divine preſcience would be incapable to deſtroy that freedom; for the preſcience of God is not the cauſe of the exiſtence of things, but is itſelf founded on their exiſtence. Every thing which to-day exiſts cannot ceaſe to exiſt while it exiſts; and it was yeſterday, and from all eternity, as certainly true

that the things which exiſt to-day were to exiſt, as it is now certain that theſe things do exiſt.

II. The ſimple preſcience of an action, before it be performed, differs in nothing from the knowledge we have of it, after it is performed. Thus preſcience changes nothing in the certainty of the event. For, let us for a moment ſuppoſe man to be free, and that his actions could not be foreſeen; would there not be, notwithſtanding that ſuppoſition, the ſame certainty of the event in the nature of things? And, in deſpite of freedom, would there not have been as great a certainty, yeſterday, and from all eternity, that I ſhould perform ſuch an action to-day, as there actually is after it is performed. Thus, whatever difficulty there may be in conceiving the manner in which the preſcience of God agrees with our freedom, as this preſcience only includes the certainty of an event, which would indubitably be found in the things themſelves, although it had not been foreſeen, it is evident it does not induce any neceſſity, nor deſtroy the poſſibility of freedom.

The preſcience of God is preciſely the ſame thing as his knowledge. Thus, in the ſame manner as his knowledge has no influence over the things which actually are, neither has his preſcience any influence over thoſe which are

to

to come; and, if freedom be in other respects possible, the power which God has of judging infallibly of free events cannot make them become the events of necessity, for that would make it requisite that an action should be the effect of freedom and of necessity at the same time.

III. It is not, I own, possible for us to conceive how God can foresee future things, unless we suppose a chain of necessary causes; for to say with the schoolmen that God is omnipresent, not indeed in his own measure, but in another measure, *non in mensurâ propriâ sed in mensurâ alienâ*, this would be to render the most important question that ever was examined by man a subject of laughter. It is much better to avow that the difficulties we meet with in reconciling the prescience of God to our freedom originate in our ignorance of the attributes of God, and not in the absolute impossibility which exists between the prescience of God and our freedom; for the agreement of his prescience with our freedom is not more incomprehensible to us than his ubiquity, his infinite duration in the past, and his infinite duration in the future, as well as many other things which it is impossible to deny, or to understand. The infinite attributes of the Supreme Being form an abyss, in

which our feeble knowledge is loſt. We know not, and are unable to know, what relation there is between the preſcience of the Creator and the freedom of the creature, and as the great Newton ſays, "*Ut cæcus ideam non habet* "*colorum, ſic nos ideam non habemus modorum* "*quibus Deus ſapientiſſimus ſenſit et intelligit om-* "*nia.*" Which may be rendered—"Like as "the blind have no idea of colours; ſo cannot "we comprehend the manner in which a be-"ing infinitely wiſe, ſees and knows all things."

IV. I ſhall further aſk thoſe who, from the conſideration of the divine preſcience, deny the freedom of man, whether God had the power to create free creatures? They muſt neceſſarily reply he had that power; for God has the power to do all things which do not imply a contradiction, and there is no contradiction implied except in the communication between the attributes to which the idea of neceſſary exiſtence and abſolute independence is attached. Now, freedom certainly is not in this predicament; for were it ſo it would be impoſſible we ſhould imagine ourſelves free, as it is that we ſhould imagine ourſelves infinite, omnipotent, &c. We are obliged therefore to own that God was able to create free beings, or to ſay that he is not omnipotent; which I believe no perſon will ſay.

If,

If, therefore, God was able to create free beings, it may be ſuppoſed he has created them; and, if to create free beings and to foreſee their determinations were a contradiction, wherefore could not God, when creating free beings, have the power to remain ignorant of the uſe they were to make of the freedom he had beſtowed? To confine it ſimply to contradictions is not to limit the divine power. Now, to create free beings, and to lay any reſtraint whatever on their determinations, is a contradiction in terms; for it is to create beings which are free and not free at the ſame time. Thus, it inevitably follows, from the power which God has to create free beings, that if he have created ſuch beings, his preſcience either does not deſtroy their freedom or he does not foreſee their actions; and he who, on this ſuppoſition, ſhould deny the preſcience of God, would not more deny his omniſcience than he who ſhould ſay that God cannot do that which implies a contradiction would deny his omnipotence.

But we are not reduced to make this ſuppoſition, for it is not neceſſary that I ſhould comprehend the manner in which the divine preſcience and the freedom of man may agree, in order to admit them both. It is ſufficient for me to be aſſured that I am free, and that God

foreſees all which is to happen, for I am then obliged to conclude that his omniſcience and his preſcience lay no reſtraint on my freedom, although I cannot conceive how this happens; like as when I have proved to myſelf there is a God, I am obliged to admit the creation *ex nihilo*, although it is impoſſible for me to conceive it.

V. This argument of the preſcience of God, if it be of any force againſt the freedom of man, is equally deſtructive of that of God; for if God foreſee all which is to happen, it is therefore not in his power to forbear doing that which he has foreſeen he ſhould do. But it has been demonſtrated above that God is free. Freedom therefore is poſſible, and God had the power to give his creatures a ſmall portion of freedom, like as he has given them a ſmall portion of intelligence. Freedom in God conſiſts in the power of thinking always as he pleaſes, and acting always as he wills. The freedom given by God to man is the feeble and limited power of performing certain motions, and applying himſelf to certain thoughts. The freedom of children, who never reflect, ſolely conſiſts in willing and performing certain motions. Were we always free we ſhould be like God. Let us be ſatisfied with that inheritance which

appertains

appertains to the rank we hold in nature; but let us not, becauſe we have not the attributes of God, renounce the faculties of man.

LETTER XXXIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, November 12th, 1737.

I OWN nothing is more deceitful than to judge of men from their reputation. The hiſtory of the czar which I ſend you obliges me to retract what the high opinion I had entertained of this monarch had induced me to affirm. He will appear very different to you in this hiſtory from the picture your imagination has formed, and, if I may be ſo allowed to ſay, we ſhall have a great man the leſs in the real world. A concourſe of fortunate circumſtances, favourable accidents, and the ignorance of foreigners, have metamorphoſed the czar into a heroical phantom, of the grandeur of which no perſon has thought proper to doubt. A ſage hiſtorian, in part a witneſs of his life, indiſcreetly draws the curtain, and ſhews us the ſovereign with all the

defects of men, and few of their virtues. He is no longer that univerſal genius which all conceives and all would penetrate, but a man governed by whims, which had ſufficient novelty to dazzle, and impart a degree of ſplendour. He is no longer the intrepid warrior who fears and knows not peril, but a cowardly and timid prince, whoſe brutality forſakes him in danger; cruel in peace, feeble in war, admired by ſtrangers, hated by his ſubjects, and, in fine, a man who extended deſpotiſm as far as a monarch could extend it, and with whom fortune was the ſubſtitute of wiſdom. In other reſpects, a great mechanic, laborious, aſſiduous, and ready to ſacrifice his all for the gratification of his curioſity.

Such will the czar Peter the Great appear to you in theſe memoirs, and though we are obliged to obliterate an infinite number of prejudices before we can prevail on ourſelves to view him thus, ſtripped of all his great qualities, it is however very certain the author advances nothing which he has not fully the power to prove.

Hence we may conclude we never can be ſufficiently on our guard when judging of great men. Thoſe who have contemplated Pompey with the eyes of admiration in the Roman hiſtory, will behold him with a very different aſpect,

pect, when they read his character in the letters of Cicero. Properly ſpeaking, the fame of men is the gift of the hiſtorian. Some appearances of great actions have induced the writers of this age to favour the czar, and their imaginations have very generouſly ſupplied whatever they thought was deficient in the portrait.

Alexander, perhaps, was only a famous freebooter; yet Quintus Curtius has found the means, whether it were to abuſe the credulity of the people or to diſplay the elegance of his own ſtyle, to make all ſucceeding ages believe him to be one of the greateſt men the earth ever bore. How many examples do hiſtorians furniſh of a marked predilection in behalf of the fame of certain princes!

But if they have given us examples of their good will, hiſtory alſo ſupplies us with others of their hatred and detraction. Recollect the various characteriſtics attributed to Julian, called the apoſtate; the hatred, the fury, the rage of your biſhop ſaints have ſo disfigured him that his true features are ſcarcely diſcoverable in the portrait which malignity has painted. This emperor has for ages been held in horror; ſo great was the impreſſion theſe impoſtors made on the minds of men. A ſage at length aroſe, who, perceiving the artifice of the monkiſh hiſ-

torians,

torians, reſtored Julian his virtues, and confounded the calumny of the fathers of your church.

Every action of man is ſubject to different interpretations; the beſt may be varniſhed with poiſon, and the worſt may be ſo gloſſed over as to render them excuſable or even praiſe worthy. Thus the partiality or the impartiality of the hiſtorian decides the judgment of the public, and of poſterity.

I put into your hands every thing I could collect moſt curious relative to the hiſtory for which you requeſted materials. Theſe memoirs contain facts equally uncommon and unknown. For this reaſon, I flatter myſelf I have furniſhed you with an authority which you could not have obtained by any other means, and I ſhall have a ſimilar merit, in relation to your work, to him who ſhould ſupply good materials for the building of an elegant edifice, to be conſtructed by ſome famous architect.

Have the goodneſs to give the (incloſed) epiſtle to the incomparable Emily. I conſecrated my labours when writing to her, and in return I requeſt ſhe will ſend me a ſevere criticiſm; for, if I have had the raſhneſs to riſe too high, my very fall muſt be glorious; like thoſe famous wretches whoſe crimes have given them

renown.

renown. I add to all this ſome other children of my leiſure, whom I intreat you to correct with didactic ſeverity.

Write to me, I intreat you, by the bearer of this letter. It is above a month ſince I received any letters from Cirey. Do not in vain alarm my friendſhip with fears concerning your health; ſay, at leaſt, I live, I breathe; you owe me theſe little attentions more than any other perſon, ſince few can have all the eſteem for you which I entertain; and, even if they had, they certainly would not have all that gratitude with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, November 19th, 1737.

I HAVE not been the laſt to perceive our correſpondence began to languiſh. Two months had nearly glided away ſince I had heard from you, when, about a week ago, I ſent off a large packet for Cirey. The friendſhip I have for you gave me infinite alarms: I imagined that indiſpoſition prevented you from an-

ſwering my letters, and I ſometimes even apprehended that the delicacy of your conſtitution had ceded to the violence and obſtinacy of the diſeaſe; in fine, I was in the ſituation of a miſer, who believes his treaſures are in imminent danger.

In the interim your letter arrived, and not only diſſipated my fears, but likewiſe taught me to feel all the pleaſure which an intercourſe with ſuch a perſon is capable of producing. A correſpondence between individuals is a barter of thoughts, but I have the advantage in the traffic; for you return me wit and truth. What man could be ſo ſtupid, or ſo little intereſted, as not to eſteem ſuch a commerce? The truth is, ſir, when we are once acquainted with you, we know not how to live without you, and your letters are to me become one of the indiſpenſable neceſſaries of life; your ideas are the food of my mind.

In the packet which I have juſt ſent off, you will find the hiſtory of the czar Peter I. The perſon who wrote it was perfectly ignorant of the uſe to which it was deſtined; he ſuppoſed he wrote only to gratify my curioſity, and for that reaſon he imagined himſelf permitted to ſpeak with all poſſible freedom of the government and the ſtate of Ruſſia. You will find in

the

the hiſtory, truths which, in this our age, but little accord with the preſs. If I could not entirely depend on your prudence, I ſhould think myſelf obliged to warn you that certain facts, which this manuſcript contai , ought either wholly to be retrenched, or treated with all poſſible circumſpection; you might otherwiſe expoſe yourſelf to the reſentment of the court of Ruſſia. I ſhould certainly be ſuſpected of having furniſhed you with the anecdotes contained in this hiſtory, and the ſuſpicion would as infallibly fall on the author by whom they had been collected. The work will not be read, but the whole world will not ceaſe to admire you.

How different is a contemplative life to the lives of thoſe men who are continually in action! A man who is only occupied in thinking may think well, yet expreſs himſelf ill; but the man of activity, though he ſhould expreſs himſelf with all imaginable grace, ought not to act feebly. This was the kind of weakneſs with which Charles II. of England has been reproached. It has been ſaid of this monarch that no word ever eſcaped him which was not in its proper place, and that he never performed one action that could be called praiſe-worthy *.

* The prince alludes to the well-known remark, that "Charles never ſaid a fooliſh thing, nor ever did a wiſe "one." T.

It

It often happens that those who declaim most against the actions of others act still worse themselves, when they happen to be under the same circumstances. I have reason to fear lest this should be one day my fate, since it is much more easy to criticise than to perform, and to lay down than to conform to precepts. Men are indeed, after all, so subject to be seduced, either by their own presumption, the splendour of their situation, or the artifice of the wicked, that their creed may be violated, although their intentions may have been the most upright and equitable.

Is not the advantageous idea which you have conceived of me founded on the description which has been given you by my dear Cesario? Truly happy is the man who is possessed of such a friend: yet suffer me to undeceive you, and to trace my own character in a few words, that you may not longer misconceive me; on condition, however, that you will not accuse me of the defect of your deceased friend Chaulieu, who continually spoke of himself.

Confide in what I tell you; I have little merit, and little knowledge, but I have much good will, and an inexhaustible fund of esteem and friendship for all persons of distinguished virtue; add to this, I am capable of that uniform constancy

ſtancy which true friendſhip requires. I have judgment enough to do you the juſtice you deſerve, but I have not enough to prevent myſelf from writing bad verſes.

You will receive a ſufficient quantity of theſe bad verſes with the laſt packet which I have addreſſed to you. The Henriade and your magnificent poetical works have induced me to do ſomething of the ſame kind; but my deſign is abortive, and it is juſt I ſhould receive correction from the perſon who firſt held out the temptation.

Nothing can equal the gratitude I feel for the trouble which you have taken to correct my ode; it is a trouble by which you have very ſenſibly obliged me, nor do I know how enough to praiſe your generous ſincerity. But how can I retouch this ode, after it has been rendered perfect by you; or how can I endure to liſten to the ſtammering of my own muſe, after having heard yours ſing ſo delightfully!

Were it not an abuſe of your friendſhip, and a robbery of time, which you ſo uſefully employ for the public good, I ſhould intreat you to give me ſome rules by which to diſtinguiſh words ſuch as are proper for poetry from thoſe that appertain to proſe. Boileau, in his Art of Poetry, has not touched upon this ſubject, nor do I

know

know any other author who has. You, ſir, better than any one, are capable of inſtructing me in an art of which you are the ornament and the honour, and of which you may be named the father.

The example of the incomparable Emily animates and encourages me in my ſtudies; I implore ſuccour from the two deities of Cirey, that they may aid me to ſurmount difficulties which lie in my road: you are my Lares, my tutelary gods, who preſide in my Lyceum, and in my academy.

> Sublime Emilia and divine Voltaire
> Are precious gifts, ſent down to bleſs mankind,
> Once in a thouſand years by pitying gods.

Ceſario alone can have communicated to you muſic of my compoſition. I very much fear leſt French ears ſhould be but little flattered by Italian ſounds, and that an art which affects only the ſenſes can give no pleaſure to perſons who find ſo many charms in intellectual delights. Should it however happen that my muſic ſhould meet with your approbation, I will willingly undertake to tickle your ears, provided you will not tire of affording me inſtruction.

I intreat you to ſalute the goddeſs Emily on my part, and to aſſure her of my admiration.

If men are eſtimable for trampling prejudice and error under foot, women are ſtill more ſo, becauſe they have a longer journey to take before they can arrive thus far, and it muſt coſt them more to pull down than us to build. How deſerving of praiſe is the marchioneſs du Chatelet for having preferred the love of truth to the illuſions of the ſenſes, and for having abandoned the falſe and momentary pleaſures of this world, that ſhe might totally addict herſelf to the ſtudy of the moſt ſublime philoſophy!

No perſon can refute M. Wolf with more politeneſs than you have done. You render juſtice to this great man, and at the ſame time remark the feeble parts of his ſyſtem; but it is a defect common to all ſyſtems to have one ſide leſs ſtrongly fortified than the remainder. The works of men always partake of humanity, nor muſt we expect perfect productions from the human underſtanding. Philoſophers in vain would combat error; the hydra will not ſuffer herſelf to be exterminated, and new heads ſpring up as faſt as the old are hewn away. It frequently happens that, from the aſhes of error, error takes birth. In a word, the ſyſtem which contains the leaſt contradiction, the leaſt impertinence, and the feweſt groſs abſurdities, ought to be regarded as the beſt.

We cannot with juſtice require metaphyſicians to give us an exact map of their empire. It would be very embarraſſing to write a geographical deſcription of a country which no man has ever ſeen, from which no intelligence is received, and which is inacceſſible. Theſe gentlemen, therefore, cannot perform impoſſibilities. They retail their romances according to the moſt mathematical order they have been able to imagine, and their reaſons, like the ſpider's thread, are ſo fine as ſcarcely to be perceptible. If Deſcartes, Locke, Newton, and Wolf, have not been able to interpret the enigma, we have reaſon to believe, and even to affirm, poſterity ſhall not be more fortunate in its diſcoveries than we have been.

Theſe ſyſtems you have conſidered like a ſage; you have ſeen the inſufficiency of them, and have added very judicious reflections: but this treaſure, which I poſſeſs by attorney, is in the keeping of Emily. I dare not reclaim it, notwithſtanding the deſire I have ſo to do, and I pacify myſelf by modeſtly reminding you that I may not renounce my rights.

If nature, ſir, could make an exception to a general rule, it certainly ought to be in your favour: your ſoul ought to be immortal, as the reward of your virtues. Heaven has beſtowed

upon you pledges of ſuch marked predilection that, if there be a future life, I dare affirm you ſhall enjoy eternal felicity.

This letter will be remitted to you by the intervention of Thiriot. I only wiſh my ſoul had wings that it might fly to Cirey; yet I alſo wiſh for wings for this material, this real part of myſelf, that I might, by word of mouth, aſſure you of the infinite eſteem with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, December 6, 1737.

MISERABLE human inconſtancy! Would an orator exclaim, were he informed of the reſolution I had made no more to meddle with my ode, and did he ſee how eaſily that reſolution was broken. I confeſs I have no ſufficient reaſon to allege in my excuſe, nor do I now write to make any apology to you; far from that, I regard you as a certain and ſincere friend, to whom I may ſafely avow all my foibles. You are my philoſophic confeſſor, and I have ſo good an opinion of your indulgence

that I have no fear in acquainting you with my follies.

Here follow a ſufficient number. An epiſtle which will make you perſpire, recollecting the labour it has coſt me; a little tale, free enough, which will give you an ill opinion of my catholiciſm, and a ſtill worſe of my heretical contentions; and, finally, an ode, which you had corrected, and which I have been raſh enough to re-write.

Let me again intreat you to recollect, ſir, that I ſend theſe pieces, ſubmitting them to your criticiſm, and do not come a pauper for praiſe. I feel how ridiculous it would be for me to enter the liſts with you, and very well comprehend that if ſome Paphlagonian had thought proper to ſend Latin verſes to Virgil, to defy him to combat, Virgil could not have done better than, inſtead of anſwering him, to have adviſed his relations to have ſhut him up in the hoſpital for lunatics, if any ſuch hoſpital there was in Paphlagonia. In ſhort I requeſt you would act the part of the ſevere, the inflexible critic.

I am at preſent in expectation of your letters, the arrival of which I promiſe myſelf every poſt-day. About the time when the letters are delivered, my ſervants are all on the ſcout to bring me your packet; I preſently become impatient myſelf,

myſelf, run to the window, and, wearied at length to perceive that nothing comes, return to my uſual occupations. If I hear any noiſe in the anti-chamber, there I am—Well, what is it?—Give me my letters. How! None!—My imagination travels much faſter than the poſt. After this has continued ſome hours, my letters arrive; I open them, I endeavour to diſcover your writing often in vain, and when I perceive it, my haſte is too great to break the ſeal. I read, but in ſuch a hurry that I am often obliged to begin again, till I have read them thrice over, before my mind is ſufficiently calm to comprehend what it is I have read; and it frequently happens that I do not ſucceed till the morrow.

Men combine a certain number of ideas to form that being which they call happineſs. If they only poſſeſs this ideal being imperfectly, or in part, they break out into bitter complaints, and often into reproaches againſt the injuſtice of Providence, for having refuſed what their imagination ſo liberally adjudges to be their due. This is a ſenſation manifeſt in myſelf. Your letters give me ſo much pleaſure when I receive them that I have a good right to rank them among the things which contribute to my happineſs. Hence you will eaſily deduce that

not to receive any is unhappineſs, and that you alone are the cauſe of this misfortune. I ſometimes blame du Breuil Tronchin, at others the diſtance of the places, and often even dare to accuſe Emily herſelf.

Do not fear, however, I wiſh to become burthenſome to you; or that, notwithſtanding the pleaſure I find in converſing with you, my importunate friendſhip would lay you under conſtraint: far to the contrary; I too well know the value of freedom to deprive thoſe perſons who are dear to me of this bleſſing; I only require ſome ſigns of life from you, ſome marks of remembrance, a little friendſhip, much ſincerity, and a firm perſuaſion of the perfect eſteem with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, December 20, 1737.

ON the 12th of the preſent month, I received a letter from your royal highneſs, dated November the 19th. In this letter you have deigned

deigned to inform me that you have had the goodneſs to ſend me a packet, containing memoirs on the government of the czar Peter I. and at the ſame time to remind me, with your uſual prudence, of the uſe it is my duty to make of theſe materials. The ſole uſe I ſhall make of them, ſir, will be to ſend your royal highneſs the work put into ſuch a form as you could wiſh, which ſhall not appear till you have firſt ſealed it with your approbation. This is the manner in which I would act in whatever quits my hands, and with this view I take the liberty at preſent to ſend you, by way of Paris, and under cover of M. Borck, a tragedy which I have lately finiſhed, and which I ſubmit to your judgment. It is my wiſh that my packet ſhould, at leaſt, travel with greater haſte toward you than yours has done on its road to me.

Your royal highneſs informs me the packet containing the memoirs of the czar, and other things of much higher value to me, was ſent on the 10th of November. Thus more than ſix weeks have glided away, and I have not yet heard any news of it. Deign, ſir, to add to your favours that of informing me of the means you have choſen, and to recommend care to thoſe in whom you have confided. When your royal highneſs ſhall condeſcend to honour me

with your letters and your commands, and to ſpeak to me with that confidential goodneſs which delights me, I imagine you cannot do better than to ſend your letters to M. Pidol, poſtmaſter at Treves. The only caution neceſſary is to pay the poſt as far as Treves, and they will be addreſſed under the cover of M. Pidol to d'Artigny at Bar-le Duc. With reſpect to any packets which your royal highneſs may ſend, perhaps the way of Paris, by the intervention of, and addreſſed to, M. Thiriot, will be the moſt convenient.

Be not weary, ſir, of enriching Cirey with your gifts. The ears of madame du Chatelet are of all countries, as are both your mind and hers. She is well acquainted with Italian muſic, nor is ſhe a general lover of the muſic of princes. The late duke of Orleans compoſed a deteſtable opera called Panthea; but you, ſir, are neither prince nor king; to us you are a man of genius.

It is ſaid that your royal highneſs has ſent ſome charming verſes to madame de la Popelinière. You muſt be told, ſir, that you are adored in France, and that you are there regarded as the young Solomon of the North. I muſt repeat it is a loſs to us that you are not born to reign elſewhere. An eſtate of a million (of livres) or

leſs,

leſs, a year; a pleaſant palace in a temperate climate; friends inſtead of ſubjects; living ſurrounded by the arts and pleaſures, and indebted for the admiration and reſpect paid by men to yourſelf alone; all theſe perhaps would be equal to a kingdom. But it is your duty one day to render the Pruſſians happy. Oh how much are they envied!

You command me, ſir, to ſend you ſome rules by which you may diſtinguiſh thoſe words in the French language which appertain to proſe, from thoſe which are conſecrated to poetry. It were to be wiſhed that any ſuch rules exiſted; but we ſcarcely have any for our language. I ſuſpect that languages gain eſtabliſhment like laws; new wants, which are only perceived by degrees, have given birth to laws which apparently are contradictory. It ſeems that men wiſh to be governed and to ſpeak by chance. However, to reduce the ſubject to ſome kind of order, I will diſtinguiſh ideas, turns, and poetical phraſes.

A poetical idea is, as your royal highneſs knows, a ſplendid figure, which is the ſubſtitute of the natural idea of the thing in queſtion. For example, in proſe I ſhould ſay, *There is a young prince in the world who poſſeſſes numerous*

talents

talents and abhors envy and fanaticiſm. But in verſe I ſhould exclaim—

> Deep in the noble boſom of this prince
> A love for ev'ry virtue, ev'ry art,
> Thou Pallas, thou Aſtrea didſt implant!
> Envy, with treach'rous heart and eye oblique,
> And Superſtition, arm'd with all her brands
> To fire the world, fall lifeleſs at his feet!

A poetical turn is an inverſion, of which proſe will not admit. I ſhould not ſay in proſe, *A prince effeminate of corrupters political*; but, *political corrupters of an effeminate prince.* I ſhould not ſay

> Such, and leſs gen'rous, on Epirus' ſhores,
> When th' empire of the world was in diſpute,
> Entruſting to the waves, and brawling winds,
> The future deſtiny of Earth and Rome,
> Pompey and Neptune in defiance holding,
> Cæſar oppos'd his fortune to the ſtorm.

The Cæſar of the ſixth line is a turn purely poetical, and were I writing in proſe I ſhould begin with Cæſar.

Thoſe words which are wholly reſerved for poetry, I mean poetry of the nobleſt kind, are few in number. Thus, for example, we ſhould not, in proſe, call horſes courſers; the crown a diadem; the kingdom of France an empire; a

coach

coach a car; actions exploits; the ſky the empyrean; the north wind Boreas, &c.

The words uſed in the familiar ſtyle are nearly the ſame, whether in verſe or proſe; but I will venture to obſerve that I do not admire the freedom, which is often taken, of intermingling in a work which ought to be uniform, in an epiſtle or in a ſatire, not only various ſtyles but various languages; as, for example, that of Marot and that of the preſent day. Such caprice diſpleaſes me as much as a picture would in which the caricatures of Calot and the low humour of Teniers ſhould be jumbled with the ſublimity of Raphael. It ſeems to me that this mixture ſpoils the language, and only tends to lead foreigners aſtray.

But the reading and the knowledge of good authors muſt have taught your royal highneſs more than any reflections of mine can convey.

With reſpect to the metaphyſics of M. Wolf, he appears to me to have generally adopted the principles of Leibnitz. I regard them both as very great philoſophers; but they were men, and therefore ſubject to error. He who may diſcover theſe errors may be far from being their equal. A ſoldier may be very able to criticiſe his general, without being capable of commanding ſo much as a battalion.

You

You charm me, ſir, as much by the diffidence you have of yourſelf as by your great talents. The marchioneſs du Chatelet, who perſonally admires you as highly as I do, adds her reſpects to mine. With theſe ſentiments, and with thoſe of the moſt devoted and tender gratitude, I am, while life ſhall remain, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, December, 1737.

YOUR royal highneſs ſhould have received an anſwer from the marchioneſs du Chatelet by the favour of M. Plœtz. But as M. Plœtz has neither written to inform us of the receipt of that letter nor of that of a tolerably large packet, which I addreſſed to him a week before for your royal highneſs, I take the liberty this time of writing by way of M. Thiriot.

I informed you, ſir, that, on a firſt glance, I gave the preference to the epiſtle on retirement, and to that amiable deſcription of the well employed leiſure which you enjoy; but I fear

fear at preſent I muſt retract. I do not find any fault committed againſt language in the epiſtle to Peſne, in which every thing breathes good taſte. The painter of the mind here writes to the ordinary painter, and I dare aſſure you, ſir, that the ſix laſt lines, for example, are written in a maſterly manner.

Abandonne tes ſaints, entourés de rayons;
Sur des ſujets brillans exerce tes crayons;
Peins-nous d'Amaryllis les grâces ingénues,
Les Nymphes des forêts, les Grâces demi-nues:
Et ſouviens-toi, toujours, que c'eſt au ſeul Amour
Que ton art, ſi charmant, doit ſon être, et le jour *.

Boileau would have written thus. You will ſuppoſe this to be flattery; you are formed, ſir, to remain ignorant of your own worth.

The epiſtle to M. du Duhan is very worthy of you; it is the product of a ſublime mind, and a grateful heart. Your royal highneſs has apparently been educated by M. Duhan. He is a happy man. Never did prince before ſo reward his tutor. I perceive, on reading all

* Reject thy ray ſurrounded ſaint,
And henceforth nobler ſubjects paint;
Depict ſweet Beauty's lovely face,
The woodland Nymph, the bathing Grace;
Forget not Love did firſt impart
The knowledge of the painter's art.

you

you have deigned to ſend me, that you have not one falſe thought. I occaſionally find errors of language, which were impoſſible to avoid; for how could you divine, for example, that *nourricier* is a word of three ſyllables, and not of four; that *aient* is one ſyllable and not two. You did not form our language, but you think *ſapere eſt principium et fons*. The ſpirit of truth always does what it does well. You deign to amuſe yourſelf in writing French verſes, and Italian muſic; and you ſeize the beauties of each. You are an excellent connoiſſeur in painting. In fine, a taſte for the true is every where your guide, and it is impoſſible but that this great quality, which is your chief characteriſtic, after having made you yourſelf happy, muſt make a whole people happy likewiſe. You will be on the throne what you are in retirement; you will reign as you think, and as you write. If your royal highneſs ſomewhat depart from the truth, it is in the praiſes you beſtow on me, and this error itſelf originates in your goodneſs.

The epiſtle you have deigned to addreſs to me, ſir, is a beautiful juſtification of poetry, and highly encouraging to me. The canticles of Moſes, the oracles of the pagans, every thing is there employed to elevate the excellence of

that

that art; but your own verſes are the greateſt eulogy that has been written on poetry. It is not very certain that Moſes is the author of the two beautiful canticles; nor that the murderer of Uriah, the lover of Bathſheba, the king who was a traitor both to Philiſtines and Iſraelites, &c. wrote his pſalms. But that the heir of the throne of Pruſſia has written very excellent French verſes is indubitable. Durſt I venture to prune this epiſtle (and this is my duty, for truth is my duty) I ſhould tell you, ſir, that *trompette* does not rhyme to *tête*, becauſe that *tête* is long and *pette* is ſhort; and that the rhyme is for the ear and not for the eye. *Défaites* for the ſame reaſon does not rhyme with *conquêtes*; *quêtes* is long and *faites* is ſhort.

Should any one inſpect my letters he would ſay, "Here is a very candid pedant, who talks "of long and ſhort to a prince of ſuperabun-"dant genius." But this prince deſcends to all things. When he reviews his regiment, he examines the accoutrements of the ſoldier. The great man neglects nothing; he gains battles when opportunity offers, and ſigns the happineſs of his ſubjects with the ſame hand with which he turns truth into rhyme.

The ode is infinitely ſuperior to what it was. I never ſhall recover from my ſurpriſe on find-

ing

ing that French odes were ſo well written in the moſt diſtant parts of Germany. We have but one example of a Frenchman who wrote Italian verſes well; this was the Abbe Regnier, but he had lived long in Italy; and your royal highneſs has never ſeen France.

The following are ſome few trifling errors of language. *Je n'eus point reçu l'exiſtence:* we ſay, *je n'euſſe. La ſageſſe avait pourvue:* we ſay, *pourvu.* A verb never takes that termination except when the participle is conſidered as an adjective. I am again becoming pedantic, but I have already aſked pardon, and you are deſirous of perfectly underſtanding a language which you ſo highly honour. We ſay, for example, *la perſonne que vous avez aimée*; becauſe *aimée* is ſuppoſed to be an adjective to *la perſonne.* For the ſame reaſon, we ſay, *la ſageſſe dont votre ame eſt pourvue*; but we ought not to ſay, *Dieu a pourvu à former un prince qui, &c.*

> " *Ta clemence infinie,*
> " *Dans aucun ſens me ſe dénie.*

Dénie cannot be uſed to ſignify *ſe dément*, and the word *dénier* can never be put except to mean *nier* or *refuſer.*

> " *Si tu me condamne à périr.*"

It

It is abſolutely neceſſary to ſay, *ſi tu me condamnes.*

"*Tel qui n'eſt plus ne peut ſouffrir.*"

Tel always ſignifies, in this ſenſe, a number of men, who perform a thing, in oppoſition to a number who do not. But this is an affair common to all men, and we muſt write, *Qui n'eſt plus ne ſaurait ſouffrir, &c.*

LETTER XXXVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Berlin, December 26th, 1737 *.

I HAVE this day been richly rewarded for the long interval during which I have received none of your letters. The poſt has brought me two at a time, to which I will reply according to the order of their dates.

Nothing could more ſurpriſe me than that of the 24th of October, in which you indicated the alarm which M. Thiriot ſo very unſeaſon-

* Dated in the Berlin edition, January 1ſt, 1738.

ably incited. You may be perfectly at eaſe concerning all that ſhall be written to you, ſince you are by no means ſuſpected of having had any part or knowledge, in any degree whatever, of the libel which has been publiſhed againſt the king. I will in a few words inform you of the affair in queſtion, which in reality is only a contemptible trifle, and wholly unworthy of conſideration.

About a year ſince, a defamatory libel, attacking the perſon of the king, was privately ſold here, under the title of *Lettre de Don Quichotte au Chevalier des Cygnes**. The lines are paſſable, but it is nothing but abuſe turned into rhyme. The bile they contain is the moſt venomous poſſible. A ſucceſſion of anecdotes, connected with all poſſible malignity, and embroidered in an abominable manner. The king has ſeen this piece, but, ſenſible alone to true glory, and the approbation of the good, he has treated the author and his production with ſovereign contempt. Nothing more was done than to forbid the ſale under ſevere puniſhment. The place at which theſe verſes have been fabricated is not unknown; we know that the infamous author is one of thoſe mercenary writers whom the ani-

* A Letter from Don Quixote to the Knight of the Swans.

mosity of a foreign court has incited to the commission of a crime; but it is too much beneath a king to concern himself with the punishment of such a wretch. Should Jupiter hurl his thunder on every reptile who, in his phrenzy, shall be audacious enough to blaspheme, thick clouds must eternally cover the surface of the earth, and the lightning must never cease to flash.

Can you imagine, sir, I would have been the last to have informed you of pretended injurious suspicions, conceived against yourself, had any such existed? You are but ill acquainted with me, and have but a feeble idea of my friendship! Know, sir, I have taken the care of your renown upon myself, and here hold the trumpet of fame. You understand me: that is, you very well comprehend I mean to say nothing more than that I have undertaken the defence of your reputation, against the prejudices of the ignorant, and the calumnies of the envious. I am your pledge, body for body; and employ argument, example, and your own works, to make proselytes. I may flatter myself with having been tolerably successful, though I claim no other merit than that of having really brought my countrymen acquainted with you. I intreat you, sir, hereafter to live in tranquillity,

and wait till I give you the ſignal before you take alarm.

I forgot to tell you that the officer whom Thiriot mentions is not of my regiment, and whoſe character for veracity in the army is not very high, which may further conduce to take from you all ſubject of apprehenſion.

I have received your chapter, from your metaphyſics, on freedom, and am mortified to tell you that I am not entirely of your opinion. I found my ſyſtem on this propoſition—that we ought not voluntarily to renounce the knowledge we may acquire by reaſon—This being ſaid, I uſe all my efforts to know every thing I poſſibly can know of God, in which analogy is of no ſmall ſuccour to me. I firſt perceive that a creative being muſt be wiſe and puiſſant. Being wiſe, he has in his eternal intelligence conceived the plan of the world, which, being omnipotent, he has put in execution. Hence it neceſſarily follows that the author of the univerſe muſt have had ſome end in creation. If he had an end, every accident muſt concur to produce that end. If all accidents concur, men muſt act conformably to the deſign of the Creator, and muſt only be determined in all their actions by the immutable laws of their deſtiny, of which, while they obey, they are ignorant.

Otherwiſe,

Otherwiſe, God would be an indolent ſpectator of nature; the world would be governed according to the caprice of men; and he whoſe omnipotence had formed the univerſe would have become uſeleſs, as ſoon as the world became peopled by feeble mortals.

We have our choice either to make a paſſive being of the Creator or the creature, and I immediately determine in favour of the Creator. It is more natural to ſuppoſe that God does all, and that man is the inſtrument of his will, than to imagine a God who creates a world, which he peoples with men that he may afterward remain inactive, and ſubject his will and his power to the caprice of the human mind.

I think I ſee an American, or ſome ſavage, who for the firſt time is ſhewn a watch: he believes that the hand which denotes the hours is free to turn of itſelf, and does not once ſuſpect there are hidden ſprings which give it motion, much leſs that a watchmaker purpoſely made it with a preciſe motion to which it is ſubject. God is the watchmaker, and the ſprings of which we are compoſed are infinitely more minute, more ductile, and more various than thoſe of a watch. Man is capable of many things, and as art is in us more hidden, and the moving principle is inviſible, we fix our attention on

that which moſt ſtrikes our ſenſes; while he who makes all the wheels act eſcapes our feeble ſight; yet he has not the leſs intended that all our actions ſhould relate to one whole, which is the ſupport of ſociety, and to the good of the ſum total of the human race.

When we examine objects ſeparately, it may happen that we may conceive ideas very different from thoſe we ſhould conceive were we to inſpect them with all their different combinations. We cannot judge of an edifice by an aſtragal, but when we conſider the whole building we may have a clear and preciſe idea of its proportion and its beauties. It is the ſame with philoſophic ſyſtems. When we take detached parts we build up a tower which has no foundation, and which conſequently falls to the ground of itſelf. Thus, when once we avow there is a God, this God muſt neceſſarily be a part of the ſyſtem, without which it would be better, for the ſake of convenience, totally to eraſe his name; for the name of God, without the idea of his attributes, and principally without the idea of his omnipotence, his wiſdom, and his preſcience, is a ſound without a ſignification, and which abſolutely is deſtitute of meaning.

I will own, if it be neceſſary thus to expreſs myſelf, we muſt collect all that is moſt noble,

moſt

moſt elevated, and moſt majeſtic, in order to conceive, though very imperfectly, what this Creator can be, this eternal, this omnipotent Being, &c. However, I would rather plunge into the abyſs of his immenſity than renounce all knowledge of him, or ſuch intellectual ideas of him as I am able to form.

In a word, were there no God, your ſyſtem would be the only one I would adopt; but as there certainly is a God, too much cannot be attributed to this God.

After this, I have ſtill to tell you, as all is founded on, or as the reaſon of all is diſcovered in, that which precedes, I find the reaſon of the temperament and the humour of each man in the mechaniſm of his body. The bile of a paſſionate man is eaſily moved; the hypochondres of the miſanthrope inflated; the lungs of the drunkard are dry; the man addicted to women has a robuſt conſtitution, &c. &c. In fine, as I find all theſe things diſpoſed in this manner in our bodies, I thence conjecture that each individual is neceſſarily acted upon after a preciſe manner, and that it does not depend upon us to be or not be of a different character. What ſhall I ſay of the accidents which conduce to give us ideas, and inſpire us with motives? For example, the fineneſs of the weather invites me

to walk; the recommendation of a man of good taſte induces me to read a book; and ſo of other things. If, therefore, I had never been informed there was a Voltaire in the world, if I had never read his excellent works, how might my will, that free agent, have determined me to grant him my whole eſteem? In a word, how can I will a thing with which I am unacquainted? Or, to attack freedom in its laſt place of refuge, how can any man reſolve to chooſe or to act, if incidents do not afford him any opportunity, and other incidents do not produce theſe incidents? It cannot be chance, for chance is a word without a meaning; it therefore can only be God. If incidents then are directed according to the will of God, he neceſſarily directs and governs man; and this is the principle which is the baſis and the foundation, as it were, of divine Providence; which leads me to conceive the moſt noble, the higheſt, and the moſt ſublime idea a creature, ſo bounded in his faculties as man is, can conceive, of a being ſo immenſe as is the Creator. This principle acquaints me with a God who is infinitely great and wiſe; who is not abſorbed (or loſt) in the moſt extenſive things (or ſyſtems)—neither is he debaſed by attending to the ſmalleſt circumſtances.

How great muſt be the immenſity of a God who generally embraces all things, and whoſe wiſdom has prepared, from the origin of the univerſe, all which is executed, to the end of time! Not, however, that I pretend to meaſure the myſteries of God by the inſufficiency of human conception; I extend my views as far as I am able; but, ſhould ſome things eſcape me, I do not, therefore, think proper to renounce thoſe which my eyes very diſtinctly perceive.

Perhaps ſome prejudice, ſome pre-conceived opinion, or the flattering thought of purſuing ſome particular idea, blinds me; perhaps I too much debaſe mankind. I do not deny that this may be ſo; but, were the king of France to be compared to the king of Ivitot, I am certain that all men in their ſenſes would acknowledge the power of Louis XV. to be the greateſt. We have ſtill greater reaſon to declare ourſelves the advocates of the puiſſance of God, who can in no manner be brought into compariſon with thoſe fugitive beings that are produced by time, ſported with by fate, and whom time deſtroys after a ſhort and tranſitory duration.

When you ſpeak of virtue, we perceive you are got into a country where you are acquaint-

ed.

ed. You treat the ſubject like a maſter who underſtands it theoretically and practically; in a word, it is eaſy for you to diſcourſe learnedly of yourſelf. Virtue certainly has no exiſtence except relatively to ſociety; the primitive principle of virtue is ſelf intereſt. Do not let this terrify you, ſince it is evident men would deſtroy each other were it not for the intervention of virtue. Nature ſpontaneouſly produces thieves, envious perſons, murderers; they are diſperſed over the whole earth, and, did not the laws repreſs vice, each individual would abandon himſelf to the inſtinct of nature, and care only for himſelf. To reunite all theſe individual intereſts, it was neceſſary to find ſome medium that ſhould ſatisfy them all, and it was agreed that men ſhould not reciprocally ſteal from each other, that they ſhould not attempt the lives of their fellow creatures, and that they ſhould mutually be inclined to whatever might contribute to the general good.

There are ſome happy mortals, ſome natively juſt minds, who love virtue for her own ſake; their hearts are alive to the pure pleaſures which are found in doing good. It is of little importance to you to know that the intereſt or the good of ſociety demands you ſhould be virtuous. The Creator has happily formed you in

ſuch

ſuch a manner that your heart is inacceſſible to vice, and this Creator uſes you as an organ, as an inſtrument, as a miniſter to render virtue more reſpectable, and more amiable among mankind. You have devoted your pen to virtue, and it muſt be acknowledged it is the greateſt preſent which virtue ever received. The temples which the Romans dedicated to her under various titles, ſerved to honour virtue; but while you gain converts you labour to form ſubjects for her, and by your life to afford an example of what is moſt praiſe-worthy in humanity.

I expect the Newtonian philoſophy, and the age of Louis XIV. with which Ceſario will arrive here on the 15th of January. Gout, fever, and love, have prevented my little ambaſſador from arriving ſooner. Any one of theſe evils is quite ſufficient moſt terribly to derange the freedom of our will.

I ſhall not fail to ſpeak my ſentiments, with all poſſible frankneſs, concerning the works which you have had the goodneſs to ſend me; it will be the moſt manifeſt mark I am able to afford you of my eſteem. If I ſtate my doubts it is not in the ſpirit of arrogance; neither is it that I have a high opinion of my own talents; but it is for the diſcovery of truth. My

doubts

doubts are but queſtions, that I may gain more perfect inſtruction, and avoid all the impediments which are met with in a path ſo thorny as that of metaphyſics. Theſe are the reaſons which oblige me never to diſguiſe my ſentiments from you. It were to be wiſhed that all intercourſe might be the traffic of truth; but how many men can be found capable of liſtening to truth? An unfortunate degree of preſumption, a pernicious idea of infallibility, a fatal habit of ſeeing all bend in their preſence, places truth at a diſtance. They can only ſuffer the echo of their own thoughts, and they carry tyranny ſo far as to wiſh to govern thoughts and opinions with as much deſpotiſm as the Ruſſians would govern a ſervile troop of ſlaves. Virtue alone is worthy of hearing truth; ſince the world is in love with error, and wiſhes to be deceived, it muſt be abandoned to its evil deſtiny; and, in my opinion, the moſt flattering homage we can pay to any perſon is to diſcover freely our thoughts, without fear of offence: in a word, to dare to contradict an author is to render tacit homage to his moderation, his juſtice, and his reaſon.

You have inſpired me with the moſt charming hopes; it is not ſufficient that you ſhould inſtruct me in ſubjects the moſt profound, but you

you think alſo of my recreation. What is it that I do not owe you! Heaven certainly ſent me a man of your merit for my happineſs: you ſingly are worth thouſands.

You have at preſent received a ſufficient quantity of my verſes, which I ſent off for Cirey at the end of November. I am paſſionately fond of poetry, but I have too many obſtacles to ſurmount to write any thing paſſable. I write in a foreign language, I want warmth of imagination, and all the good things had been ſaid before I became an author. I reſemble vines, which always partake of the quality of the ground in which they are planted. It ſhould ſeem that Remuſberg is tolerably proper for rhyme, but that this place, at moſt, can only produce proſe. Have the goodneſs to aſſure the incomparable Emily of my whole eſteem. She has diſarmed my anger by the extract from your metaphyſics which I have juſt received. I will freely confeſs I had ſome regret to diſcover the leaſt trifle in her which can approach imperfection: at preſent ſhe is ſuch as I deſire her to be.

Although I do not diſcover the word Cirey among my hereditary titles, I nevertheleſs feel you were formed to inſtruct, as I was to admire you. To repeat any aſſurances of my eſteem would

would be ſuperfluous. Of this I flatter myſelf you are convinced, as well as of all the ſentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

January 23d, 1738.

I HAVE received a letter from Berlin, dated December 26th, which contains two principal articles; the one full of goodneſs, tenderneſs, and attention, enough to overwhelm me with the moſt flattering benefits; and the ſecond a very forcibly written eſſay on metaphyſics. We ſhould have ſuppoſed the letter had been ſent by Leibnitz, or Wolf, to ſome one of their friends, but it is ſigned Frederic. This is one of the prodigies you, ſir, enact. Your royal highneſs perfectly fills your character; you clear me from the aſperſions of calumny, you protect my honour againſt the ſhafts of envy, and ſend the food of intelligence for my mind.

I am, therefore, proceeding in metaphyſical midnight to combat againſt Leibnitz, Wolf, and Frederic.

Frederic. Behold me, like Ajax, fighting in the dark, and hear me exclaim, Great Jove! afford us but light, and be thou our opponent*.

But, before I enter the lists, I will transcribe two epistles to put in the packet, which are the commencement of a kind of moral system I began about a year ago. Four epistles are written; these are the two first; the subject of the one is the equality of mankind, the other is on freedom. It is impertinent enough in me, an atom of Cirey, to say, to a head over which a crown is suspended, that men are equal, and to send satirical rhymes against the partisans of fatality, to a philosopher who lends support so powerful to the system of necessity.

But these two rash acts of mine prove the goodness of your royal highness. You lay no constraint on the conscience: you permit us to dispute with you. Thus the angel wrestled with Jacob. I shall remain lame, but no matter; I wish to acquire the honour of having fought.

* The words of Homer are

———δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι
Ἐν δὲ φάει κ̓ ὄλεσσον ἐπεὶ νύ τοι εὐαδὲν οὕτως.

Literally—Give us but light and destroy us, since such is thy will. T.

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As to the equality of mankind, I believe it as firmly as I believe that a mind like yours would every where be equal. Your motto is

Nave ferar magna, an parva ferar, unus et idem.

With reſpect to freedom, the ſubject is a kind of chaos. Let us ſee whether Clarke, Locke, and Newton ought to be my inſtructors; or whether Leibnitz, though in the character of a prince, ſhould afford me information. Nothing certainly can be more ſtrong than what your royal highneſs has ſaid in proof of neceſſity. I immediately perceive you entertain the ſame opinion as Leibnitz and Wolf, on *the adequate cauſe*. It is a fine idea, that is to ſay a true one; for, in fine, there is nothing without a cauſe, nothing which has not a reaſon for its exiſtence. But does that idea exclude the freedom of man?

I. What do I underſtand by freedom?—The power of thinking and of acting, in conſequence of a power which is very bounded, as all my faculties are.

II. Is it I who think, and who conſequently act, or is it another who thinks and acts for me? If it be myſelf, I am free; for to be free is to act. Whatever is paſſive is not free.—Is it another who

who acts for me? I am deceived by that other, when I suppose myself to be the agent.

III. Who, what, is that other who deceives me? Either there is or there is not a God. If there be a God, it is he who deceives me, continually; that infinitely wise, infinitely consistent Being, who, without adequate cause, is eternally occupied in errors directly opposite to his essence, which is truth.

If there be no God, what is it then which deceives me? Is it matter, which, of itself, is destitute of intelligence?

IV. To prove to ourselves, in despite of this interior conviction, of this testimony which we render ourselves of our freedom, I say to prove to ourselves that no such freedom exists, we must first necessarily prove it to be impossible. This appears to me incontestable. Let us examine how it would be impossible.

V. Freedom could only be impossible after two ways; either because there is no being that can bestow it, or because it is in itself a contradiction in terms, like as a long square is a contradiction. But the idea of the freedom of man contains nothing in itself that is contradictory. We are, therefore, to enquire whether the infinite Being, the Creator, be free; and, if he be, whether he were able to impart a small por-

tion of this attribute to man, like as he has imparted a ſmall portion of his intelligence.

VI. If God be not free, he is not an agent; conſequently he is not God. If he be free and omnipotent, it follows that he was able to impart freedom to man. We have, therefore, to enquire what reaſon there is to believe he has not imparted this gift.

VII. It is pretended that God has not given us freedom, becauſe, if we were agents, we ſhould then be independent of himſelf. And what, it is aſked, would God do when we ſhould act from ourſelves? To this I give two anſwers: 1. That God does when men act that which he did before men had being, and that which he ſhall do when they are no more. 2. That his power is not the leſs neceſſary for the preſervation of his works, and that the communication which he has made to us of a ſmall portion of freedom is no deduction from his infinite power, ſince it is itſelf an effect of his infinite power.

VIII. It is objected that we are hurried away ſometimes in deſpite of ourſelves; and I anſwer, then we are ſometimes maſters of ourſelves. Illneſs proves health, and freedom is the health of the ſoul.

IX. The aſſent of the underſtanding, it is added, is neceſſary, and the will follows the aſ-

ſent;

ſent; therefore, man wills and acts from neceſſity. I reply that we really wiſh from neceſſity; but to wiſh and to will are two very different things; and ſo different that a wiſe man often wills and does that which he does not wiſh. To combat our wiſh is the moſt exalted effect of freedom, and I imagine that one of the great ſources of miſunderſtanding among men, on this ſubject, originates in often confounding the wiſh and the will.

X. But, were we free, ſay thoſe who object, there would be no God. I believe, on the contrary, that it is becauſe there is a God that we are free; for, were it all neceſſity, did this world exiſt of itſelf, from abſolute neceſſity (which abounds in contradictions) it is certain that every thing would then be performed by motions which would neceſſarily be connected: there would then be no freedom. Hence, no God no freedom. I am much ſurpriſed to obſerve the reaſons on this ſubject which have eſcaped the illuſtrious Leibnitz.

XI. The moſt formidable argument that has ever been brought, againſt our freedom, is the impoſſibility of making it accord with the preſcience of God; and when I am told God knows that which you ſhall do twenty years hence, therefore, what you ſhall do twenty years hence

is abſolute neceſſity, I confeſs, I am at a ſtand, that I have nothing to anſwer, and that all philoſophers who have endeavoured to reconcile future contingencies with the preſcience of God have been very bad negociators. There are ſome who have effrontery enough to ſay that God may very well be ignorant of future contingencies; nearly, if I may be permitted the compariſon, as a king may be ignorant of the future acts of his general, to whom he has given full powers.

Theſe people go ſtill further; they maintain that it would not only be no imperfection in a Supreme Being to be ignorant of what creatures ſhould freely do, whom he has created free, but that, on the contrary, it ſeems moſt worthy of the Supreme Being to create beings ſimilar to himſelf; ſimilar, I ſay, in that they think, will, and act; inſtead of creating mere machines.

They add that God cannot be guilty of contradiction; and perhaps there would be a contradiction in foreſeeing what his creatures muſt do, yet, at the ſame time, communicating to them the power of doing or forbearing; for, ſay they, freedom conſiſts in the power of acting or forbearing to act; therefore, did God preciſely know which of the two would happen, the

the oppoſite would be impoſſible, and there would be no freedom. Thus theſe people admit freedom and deny preſcience, which to admit would, according to them, imply a contradiction in terms.

In fine, they affirm that God muſt be ignorant of that of which it is his nature to be ignorant; and they are daring enough to ſay that it is his nature to be ignorant of all future contingencies, and that he cannot know that which is not.

Might it not very well be, ſay they, that, from the ſame ſtore of wiſdom which makes God foreſee, eternally foreſee, things neceſſary, he ſhould be ignorant of things free? Would he be leſs the creator of all things, of free agents, and of beings purely paſſive?

Who has told us, continue they, that it would not be a ſufficiently great ſatisfaction for God to ſee how ſo many free beings, whom he has created in ſo many worlds, freely act? This pleaſure, continually new, of obſerving how his creatures every moment employ the inſtruments he has beſtowed, might well be equal to that eternal and indolent contemplation of himſelf, which is incompatible with the external occupations that are attributed to him.

It is objected to theſe reaſoners that God in

an inſtant ſees the paſt, the preſent, and the future; that eternity is to him momentaneous: but they reply they do not underſtand this language; and that an eternity, which is but a moment, appears to them as abſurd as an immenſity, which is but a point.

Might we not ſay, without being equally bold, that God foreſees our free actions, nearly in the ſame manner as a wiſe man foreſees the part he ſhall act on ſuch an occaſion, and with a man with whoſe character he is acquainted? The difference would be that the man would foreſee erroneouſly, and that God would foreſee with infinite ſagacity. This is the opinion of Clarke.

I own all this appears to me very doubtful, and that it is a confeſſion rather than a ſolution of the difficulty. In fine, ſir, I own that very excellent objections are made againſt freedom, but equally good are made againſt the exiſtence of God; and as, in deſpite of the extreme difficulties raiſed againſt a creating providence, I ſtill believe in creation and providence, ſo do I believe myſelf free (that is to ſay to a certain point) in deſpite of the powerful objections which you make.

I therefore write to your royal highneſs, not as to an automaton created to be at the head of

ſome

ſome millions of human puppets, but as a being among the moſt free, and the wiſeſt, God has ever deigned to form.

Indulge me, ſir, in a reflection. Among twenty men, nineteen will be found who do not govern themſelves by principle, but your ſoul appears to be of the ſmaller number, full of fortitude and grandeur, and which acts as it thinks.

In the name of humanity, condeſcend to believe that we have ſome freedom; for, ſhould you imagine we are pure machines, what will become of the friendſhip in which you delight? What will be the value of the great actions you ſhall perform? What muſt be the gratitude due to your royal highneſs, for endeavouring to render mankind better and more happy? In fine, how muſt you regard the attachment of others to yourſelf, the ſervices that may be rendered you, or the blood that may be ſhed in your behalf? And ſhall the moſt generous, the moſt tender, the wiſeſt of men, contemplate all that is done to give him pleaſure with the ſame indifference as he would the wheels of a water-mill, that keep turning, and are worn and broken to pieces by their uſeful labours? No, ſir, your ſoul is too noble thus to deprive itſelf of the moſt ſplendid part of its inheritance.

Pardon thefe arguments, this morality, and this babbling. I do not fay I have not been free while fpeaking thus; no, I imagine I have written with great freedom, and it is this freedom for which I afk pardon.

The marchionefs du Chatelet fails not to join me in refpect and admiration.

My laft letter was that of a pedantic grammarian, and this of a bad metaphyfician. But that, and this, and all others will be from a man eternally attached to your royal highnefs.

I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Potfdam, January 19, 1738 *.

I HOPE you have by this time received the memoirs on the government of the czar Peter and the verfes which I fent you. They were committed to the care of a captain in my regiment, of the name of Plœtz, who is at Luneville, and who apparently could not remit them

* January the 26th in the Berlin edition.

to

to you ſooner, either from the abſence of ſome officers, or for want of finding a good opportunity.

I am convinced I riſk nothing in confiding ſecret and curious memoirs to you; your diſcretion and prudence deprive me of all the fears I might otherwiſe entertain. My reaſon for remarking to you what uſe ought to be made of theſe memoirs, on the Muſcovites, was only to let you underſtand the neceſſity there is to employ ſome management in treating on ſubjects of ſuch delicacy. Moſt princes have a ſingular paſſion for genealogies; this is a kind of ſelf-love, which extends back to their remoteſt predeceſſors, and which intereſts them in the renown, not only of their anceſtors in a right line, but likewiſe for their collaterals. To venture to tell them that ſome among their predeceſſors have been men of little virtue, and conſequently very contemptible, is to commit an injury which they will never pardon; and woe to the profane author who has had the temerity to enter the ſanctuary of their hiſtory, and to divulge the ſhame of their houſe.

If this delicacy did but extend to the reputation of their female predeceſſors, tolerable reaſons might indeed be given for a zeal ſo ardent; but to pretend that fifty or ſixty of our progenitors have all been the moſt worthy men

poſſible is to confine virtue to a ſingle family, and to be guilty of injuſtice to the whole human race.

I one day was thoughtleſs enough to ſay, in the preſence of a certain perſon, that ſuch another perſon was guilty of an action unworthy of a gentleman. Unfortunately for me, it happened that the perſon of whom I had ſo freely ſpoken was a ſort of couſin to the other; and he took up the affair very ſeriouſly. I aſked the reaſon of his behaviour, was informed, and was obliged to ſubject myſelf to a long genealogical detail, to examine in what my miſtake conſiſted. I had no other reſource than that of ſacrificing all thoſe, among my relations, who did not merit to be among them, to the anger of the perſon offended. I was loudly blamed, but I juſtified myſelf by ſaying that every man of honour, every worthy man, was my relation, and that I knew no other.

If a private perſon can be ſo grievouſly offended by ill ſpoken of his kindred, what may be the anger of a ſovereign to whom ill ſhould be ſpoken of one of her progenitors *, who in her opinion was a reſpectable character, and from whom ſhe derives all her grandeur?

I feel myſelf very little capable of cenſuring

* The Berlin edition reads—*une ſouveraine*—in the feminine; conſequently refers to Anne Petrowna, at that time empreſs of Ruſſia. T.

your works; you ſtamp them with the character of immortality, to which nothing can be added; and, notwithſtanding the deſire I have to be of ſervice to you, I perceive I never can do you the good office which was performed by the old woman of Moliere, when he read his comedies to her. I have told you my opinion concerning the tragedy of Merope, which, according to the little knowledge I have of the theatre and the rules of the dramatic art, appears to me the moſt regular piece you have ever written.

I am perſuaded it will do more honour to you than Alzira, and I intreat you would be kind enough to ſend me the correction of thoſe errors of the tranſcriber which I pointed out to you.

I ſhall try the route of Treves, according to your requeſt, and I hope you will take care that my letters ſhall be ſent you from Treves to Cirey, and to inform the poſt-maſter of the attention it is neceſſary he ſhould pay to this correſpondence. You give me to underſtand it would not be diſagreeable to you to receive ſome muſical compoſition of mine: be ſo good as to inform me what number of performers you have, that, by knowing this, and the inſtruments they play, I may ſend you pieces properly adapted. I will ſend you *le Couvreur*, ſet as a cantata.

Que

Que vois-je! Quel objet! Quoi! ces levres charmantes, &c.

But I fear to awaken in you the recollection of happineſs which is paſt; we rather ought to detach the mind from gloomy ſubjects. Our life is too ſhort to abandon ourſelves to chagrin; we ſcarcely have time to make merry, I ſhall, therefore, only ſend you cheerful muſic.

The imprudent Thiriot has trumpeted to the four quarters of the world that I have addreſſed an epiſtle in verſe to madame de la Pópelinière. Had theſe verſes been paſſable my vanity would not have failed to have teazed you with them immediately, but, the truth is, they are very indifferent; and, for this reaſon, I repent of having ſhewn them.

I ſhould be very glad to live in a temperate climate. I very much wiſh to merit and to poſſeſs friends like yourſelf, and to be eſteemed by worthy people. I would willingly renounce that which forms the principal object of the cupidity and ambition of men; but I feel that were I not a prince I ſhould be very inſignificant. Your merit is ſufficient to make you eſteemed and envied, and to gain admiration; for my part, titles, heraldry, and revenues are neceſſary for me to attract the attention of mankind. Ah! my dear friend, how much reaſon have you to be ſatisfied with your deſtiny! A

great

great prince, being on the point of falling into the hands of his enemies, while his courtiers were in tears and deſpairing around him, uttered theſe few words, which include much meaning: "I feel, by your tears, I am yet a king."

How much is my gratitude indebted to you for all the trouble I give you. You continually inſtruct me, yet are not weary of inſtructing. I ſhould, in reality, ſir, be very ungrateful did I not feel all you do for me; at preſent I apply myſelf to put all thoſe rules in practice you have given me, and I intreat you would not be weary of correction.

I have more than once aſked myſelf how it ſhould happen that the French, who are ſo fond of novelty, ſhould at preſent revive the antique language of Marot. The French tongue certainly was not at that time nearly ſo much poliſhed as it is at preſent. What pleaſure can the chaſte ear find in ſounds ſo rude as the following old words afford, *oncques*, *preux*, *la machine publique*, *accoutremens*, *&c. &c?*

Should any perſon in Paris appear in the dreſs of the age of Henry IV. it would be thought very ſtrange, though that dreſs might be equally convenient with the modern. How does it happen, pray, that the French wiſh to ſpeak and to revive a language the contemporary of

faſhions

faſhions which they will no longer endure? What renders it more extraordinary is that language is but little underſtood, at preſent, while the language of the preſent day is much more correct, and much better; is ſuſceptible of all the ſimplicity of that of Marot, and is poſſeſſed of beauties to which the other never durſt pretend. Theſe, in my opinion, are the effects of ill taſte, and the freaks of caprice. It muſt be confeſſed there is ſomething very ſtrange in the human mind.

I am now about to return to the place of my reſidence, to devote myſelf to ſtudy, and again reſort to philoſophy, hiſtory, poetry, and muſic. I own to you I am in fear of the mathematics; they render the imagination dry, and that is a defect to which we Germans are already too ſubject; ours is an ungrateful ſoil, which muſt be tilled and watered inceſſantly, if we would render it productive.

Aſſure the marchioneſs du Chatelet of my whole eſteem, and tell Emily I entertain all poſſible admiration for her. With reſpect to yourſelf, ſir, you muſt reſt perſuaded of the perfect eſteem I entertain for you. I once more repeat I ſhall continue this eſteem for you as long as I live, and that with thoſe ſentiments of admiration with which you ſo well know how

to

to inſpire all thoſe who are acquainted with you, I remain,

SIR,

Your very faithful affectionate friend.

LETTER XLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, January, 1738.

I HAVE received the moſt agreeable new-year's gifts that ever were accepted; two large packets from your royal highneſs have arrived both at once, the one by favour of M. Thiriot, and the other by that of M. Plœtz, a captain in your regiment, who addreſſed his packet to me from Luneville. By favour of the ſame M. Plœtz, I have the honour to return an anſwer to your royal highneſs, on the very day, or rather, the very night I received your letter; for I paſſed a great part of the night in reading your verſes, which theſe two packets contained, and the very inſtructive proſe concerning Ruſſia.

Be aſſured, ſir, your poetry has done this proſe great injury, and that we love better to read

read four rhymes ſigned *Frederic*, than every event the empire of the Ruſſians, or univerſal hiſtory itſelf, could afford. It is not becauſe theſe verſes praiſe Emily and me, nor is it becauſe French verſes have had the honour to be written by an heir to a kingdom of Germany; it is truly becauſe they are very charming, exceedingly well written, and in the beſt poſſible taſte. The marchioneſs du Chatelet, who hitherto has only been a philoſopher, intends to become a poet, that ſhe may anſwer you.

For my own part, ſir, I have ſo many of your preſents that I know not which to ſpeak of firſt. We were only able to read the whole very rapidly, but, at the firſt glance, we gave the preference to the little piece in lines of eight ſyllables, in which you have drawn a parallel between the retired and free life you now live, with that which you muſt one day unfortunately lead.

Tell me whether my conjecture be true; I am perſuaded that theſe verſes coſt you leſs in the writing than the others. They breathe the facility, the eaſe, the grace of genius. It further appears to me that of all ſtyles this perhaps is moſt ſuitable to a prince like you, becauſe it abounds with that freedom and thoſe charms with which you inſpire the ſocieties you honour

with

with your preſence. This ſtyle does not partake of the labour of a man too much occupied by poetry. Your other works have their value. I ſhall have the honour to mention them in my firſt letter, but this ſhall be the ſaint of the day. There are but very few errors which have eſcaped from the vivacity of the royal author, and theſe are rather the errors of the hand than of the underſtanding. For example,

> J'*auſe* profiter de la vie,
> Sans craindre les *tres* de l'envie.

In your haſte you have written *j'auſe* for *j'oſe*, *tres* for *traits*, *matein* for *matin*, &c. You ſuppoſe *amitié* to be four ſyllables, and it is but three; *carrière* in like manner you imagine three ſyllables, and it is but two. Theſe are ſuch obſervations as the door-keeper of the French academy might ſend; but the reaſon is, ſir, that I have few others to make. I do but ſet your ſhoe buckle ſtrait, while the Graces preſent and adjuſt your robes.

The reaſon I have thus far preferred this work is that it is an unadorned picture of your preſent life. I ſeem to be one of the courtiers of your royal highneſs, to have the happineſs of hearing you, and to repeat my doubts on thoſe ſciences you ſtudy. Cirey is beſide the picture

of Remuſberg in miniature; my heroine lives like my hero. I ſhould ſay ſomething concerning the epiſtle which your royal highneſs has addreſſed to her, but I ſhould do you both wrong were I not to let her anſwer for herſelf.

> Worthy alike to liſten or to ſpeak,
> 'Tis hers alone to anſwer all you write.
> To ſuch an Alexander's noble theme
> Such a Thaleſtris only can reply.

How many thanks have I to return your royal highneſs for the letter from M. Duhan to M. Pene! I ſcarcely dare mention the verſes you have deigned to addreſs to me. How high is my reward, and how great is my encouragement to merit if poſſible your bounties! Be kind enough to ſuffer me to recollect myſelf; my brain is intoxicated. I will talk of all theſe things when I am ſufficiently cool.

In order to ſober myſelf, I will come immediately to the proſe, and the particulars concerning Ruſſia, which you have been kind enough to ſend me, and for the arrival of which I was extremely anxious.

They ſeem to have been written by a man well acquainted with facts and the country. I am not aſtoniſhed to perceive thoſe contraſts in the czar Peter I. which diſhonour his great qualities,

qualities, and all that I am able to ſay in excuſe for the monarch is that he himſelf was ſenſible of them. A burgomaſter of Amſterdam one day praiſed him for his deſire to reform his nation. It will coſt me much trouble, replied the czar; but I have a work ſtill more difficult to perform. What is that? ſaid the Dutchman. To reform myſelf, anſwered the czar. I allow, ſir, he was a barbarian; ſtill he was a barbarian who created a new race; a barbarian who quitted empire that he might learn to reign; a barbarian who wreſtled againſt education and nature; he founded cities, he cut canals from ſea to ſea, he taught a people to be mariners who had no ideas of ſuch an art, and he endeavoured even to make the unſociable live in ſociety.

That he had great defects cannot be doubted, but were they not veiled by that creative ſpirit which made him imagine ſuch a multitude of projects, all for the grandeur of his country, and many of which have been executed? Did he not eſtabliſh the arts? In fine, did he not diminiſh the number of monks? Your royal highneſs has good reaſon to deteſt his vices and his ferocity. In Alexander, of whom you ſpeak, you hate the murderer of Clytus; but do you not admire the avenger of Greece, the vanquiſher

of Darius, and the founder of Alexandria? Do you not recollect that he chaſtiſed the inſolent pride of the Perſians, that he built cities which became the centre of the commerce of the world, that he loved the arts, and that he was the moſt generous of men.

The czar, you ſay, ſir, had not the valour of Charles XII. which is true; ſtill this czar, though born with little valour, fought battles, beheld men killed on every ſide of him, and perſonally conquered the braveſt man on earth. I love a coward who gains victories.

I will not diſſemble his faults, but I will beſtow all poſſible praiſe, not only on all the great acts he performed but on thoſe he wiſhed to perform. I wiſh all the hiſtories which only retrace the vices and the phrenzies of kings were ſunk in the ſea. Of what uſe are theſe regiſters of crimes and horrors? What but ſometimes to encourage a feeble prince in exceſſes of which he would be aſhamed, if he were not incited by example. Will a pope long heſitate to commit fraud, and adminiſter poiſon, when he reads that Alexander VI. maintained himſelf by deceit, and by poiſoning his enemies?

Would to heaven that we only were acquainted with kings from the good they have done! The world

world would be happily deceived, and no ſovereign would dare perhaps to ſet an example of malignity or tyranny.

I ſhall probably be obliged to ſpeak of the empreſs Martha, afterward named Catharine, and of the unfortunate ſon of this ferocious legiſlator. May I venture to intreat your royal highneſs to procure me ſome intelligence concerning the life of that ſingular woman, and the manners and the kind of death of the czarowitz. I much fear that death will tarniſh the glory of the czar. I know not whether nature rid a great man of a ſon who was unable to imitate him, or whether the father ſullied his reign by a horrible crime.

Infelix, utcumque ferent ea fata nepotes!

Will your royal highneſs have the goodneſs to add theſe particulars to thoſe with which you have already honoured me? You were born to protect and inſtruct me, &c.

LETTER XLII.

From M. de Voltaire.

February 5, 1738.

THE ring, ſir, you ſent, which is wrought with ſuch art,
Though bright to the eye, is more dear to the heart.
Charlemagne and Angelica each had a ring,
The virtues of which poets rapturouſly ſing;
Yet yours is ſo precious, I boldly aver,
I none but the ring of Hans-Carvel prefer.

Your royal highneſs greatly embarraſſes me by your goodneſs, for I ſhall ſoon have another tragedy to ſend you; and, however great an honour it may be to receive the preſents you ſend, I ſhould rather wiſh this new tragedy might ſerve, if ſo it could, to pay for the preſent ring than appear to ſolicit another.

Pardon my poetic inſolence, ſir. But how can you expect my mind ſhould not be ſomewhat inflated? You grant me your ſuffrage, which is the moſt flattering recompenſe I can receive, and I am ſo well ſatisfied with this reward that I do not ſeem to wiſh to derive any other from my Merope. Your royal highneſs to me ſhall ſtand in lieu of the public: I think it enough that your

your mafculine mind, worthy of your rank, has approved a French tragedy without love. I will not do our pit and boxes the honour to prefent them with a work which fo ftrongly condemns the fophificated and effeminate tafte which has prevailed among us. I dare believe, according to the opinion of your royal highnefs, that any man, not fpoiled by liftening to thofe amorous elegies which we name tragedies, will be affected by the maternal love which predominates through Merope. But our French are unfortunately fo gallant, and fo handfome, that all authors who have treated fuch fubjects have always embellifhed them by fome amorous intrigue, between a young princefs and a very amiable cavalier. We find they have cut for partners in the Electra of Crébillon; a tragedy in other refpects of great pathos. The Amafis of La Grange, which is the fubject of Merope, is interlarded with an amour exceedingly well managed. This in fine is our general tafte, and to this Corneille always fubjected himfelf. When Cæfar comes to Egypt, it is to behold

——————une reine adorable! *

And Anthony anfwers him—

* An adorable queen.

Oui, ſeigneur! Je l'ai vue; elle eſt incomparable! *

Old Marcian, the wrinkled Sertorius, holy Paulina, and the proſtituted St. Théodore, are all amorous.

Not that love is a paſſion unworthy the ſtage; but it muſt be tragic love; paſſionate, furious, cruel, and criminal; nay, if you pleaſe, horrible; but not gallant.

Let me intreat your royal highneſs to read the Merope of the marquis Maffei, written in Italian, and you will perceive, however different it may be from mine, I have at leaſt the good fortune to agree with him in the ſimplicity of my ſubject, and in the attention which I have paid not to leſſen the intereſt of the piece by the introducing of any intrigue foreign to the plot. To employ your leiſure in judging the works of all countries, is an occupation worthy of a genius like yours. This is the true univerſal monarchy, and far more certain than that to which the houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon have aſpired.

I know not yet whether your royal highneſs has received my packet, and the letter of the marchioneſs du Chatelet, ſent by favour of M. Plœtz. I bid you adieu, ſir, that I may imme-

* Yes, ſir; I have ſeen her; ſhe is incomparable.

diately

diately apply myſelf to the new work with which, in a few weeks, I hope to amuſe the Trajan and the Mæcenas of the North.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect and the tendereſt gratitude &c.

LETTER XLIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, February 4, 1738.*

I AM much vexed that you were ſo long before you received the hiſtory of the czar, and my good for nothing verſes. You will dream better lines than I can write waking, and, ſhould any that are paſſable be found in the crowd, it will only be becauſe they have been ſtolen from, or written in imitation of, yours. I labour like the ſculptor who, when he made the Venus de Medicis, formed the features of her face and the proportions of her body after the moſt beautiful perſons of his age. It was moſaic work; but if theſe ladies had demanded, the one her eyes, the other her neck, and a third the form of her countenance, what of the poor Venus would have remained

* Undated in the Berlin copy.

remained to the ſtatuary? I own the parallel between my life and that of the court coſt me little; but you praiſe it more than it deſerves. It is rather a narrative of my occupations than a poetical compoſition, embelliſhed with proper imagery. I thought not to have ſent it you, ſo very negligent did I think the ſtyle.

I wait with impatience for the verſes which Emily means to take the trouble to write. I am certain to gain by the traffic, and were I a Carteſian I ſhould be highly vain of being the occaſional cauſe of good productions from the marchioneſs.

It is ſaid that when preſents are made to princes they are returned a hundred fold, but here it is the very reverſe. I ſend you debaſed coin, and you return me ineſtimable merchandiſe. How fortunate it is to have a mind reſembling yours (or that of Emily) which like a river overflows and fertilizes the country wherever its waters ſpread! It would not be difficult here for me to enumerate the many occaſions you have taken to excite my gratitude, though I ſhould have an infinity of things to ſay of the Mundane, of his defence, of the ode to Emily, of other pieces, and of the incomparable Merope. Theſe are preſents which you are the only man in the world capable of making.

You and Apollo Merope reſtore,
With beauties ſuch as make mankind adore;
A perfect model of the true ſublime,
And draw down Envy's curſe in proſe and rhyme.

You cannot imagine how much my ſelf-love is humbled by your verſes; there is no withſtanding them.

Like Age in the fable, I call'd out for aid—
Not to Death, for, of him and his bare bones afraid,
Were he here, I've no doubt I ſhould wiſh he were hence—
I call'd my Familiar, in hopes he'd diſpenſe
His favours poetic, and bid the verſe flow,
The fancy all ſportive, the heart in a glow,
As freely as e'er with Anacreon, of old,
Or Catullus, whoſe tales are ſo charmingly told!
I call'd and moſt modeſtly aſk'd, for this time,
If he could not give reaſon, at leaſt he'd give rhyme.
The kind-hearted ſprite lent an affable ear,
And in Love, or in Dove, was about to appear,
When in came the Graces—(the Loves and the Smiles
Flutter'd after, with all their ineffable wiles)
They led a young beauty, of aſpect divine,
Whom you and Apollo had deign'd to conſign
To their care: I heard pleas'd Melpomene call
The virgin her child!—'Twas the child of ye all!
'Twas Merope! Who more ſententious and ſage is
Than he who the wiſeſt was deem'd of wiſe ages;
Than Tully more eloquent; ſhe who, in truth,
Soon taught me to bluſh at the crimes of my youth;
Soon taught me to pity, and ſpurn from my ſight,
The poor paltry jargon and rhymes which I write!

Enraged

Enraged at the farce I ſo often rehearſe,
Deſpiſing my proſe, and deteſting my verſe,
I diſmiſs'd my Familiar, in language uncivil,
And bade the dull Demon pack off to the Devil.
Yet, if to old Tophet the poor Goblin gone is,
Heav'n ſhield me, ſay I, from the Lex-talionis!

I am like the Spaniards ſettled in Mexico, who are very ſingularly vain of the beauty of their brown ſkins and olive colour. What would they ſay were they to behold an European beauty, whoſe complexion diſplays the fineſt tints, whoſe ſkin is like a tranſparent varniſh, which is laid over the picture, yet ſuffers the moſt minute ſtrokes of the pencil to be ſeen! Their pride, I imagine, would be entirely routed; and, if I am not very much deceived, a Narciſſus ſo ridiculous would break his looking glaſs with vexation and anger.

You ſeem to be ſatisfied with the memoirs of the czar Peter I. which I ſent you, and I am highly ſo that I have been able to be of any uſe to you. I will make all neceſſary inquiry to obtain the particulars of the adventures of the czarina, and of the life of the czarowitz, which you requeſt. You will not be ſatisfied with the manner in which this prince ended his days, when you learn that it was by the ferocity and cruelty of his father.

Were

Were we to take the trouble coolly to examine the good and the evil which the czar effected in his country, were we to weigh his excellent and his ill qualities in the balance, and to examine which would preponderate, we ſhould perhaps find that this monarch performed many brilliant bad actions, that he poſſeſſed heroic vices, and that his virtues were darkened and eclipſed by theſe vices, which were innumerable. If I do not miſtake, humanity ſhould be the firſt quality of a reaſonable man. If he make this a principle, in deſpite of his defects, good muſt be the conſequence. But if, on the contrary, a man has none but barbarous and inhuman ſentiments, it may very well happen, that he may do ſome good, but his life will ever be ſullied by crimes.

True it is that hiſtory is, in part, the annals of the malignity of mankind; but, with the poiſon, it alſo preſents the antidote. We find in hiſtory examples of an infinite number of wicked princes, tyrants, and monſters; but, we ſee them hated by their people, deteſted by their neighbours, and held in abomination by the whole world: their very names become opprobrious, and it is injurious to the fame of the living to be called after one of theſe dead. Few men are inſenſible to fame; however wicked

they may be, they do not wiſh to be thought ſo; they would all be cited as examples of virtue, probity, and heroiſm. With diſpoſitions like theſe, I believe the reading of hiſtory, and the proofs it affords of the ill fame of thoſe monſters whom nature has brought forth, cannot fail of producing an advantageous effect on the minds of thoſe monarchs who ſhall read; for, while they regard vices as actions which degrade and tarniſh fame, the pleaſure of doing good will appear ſo pure that to remain inſenſible of it will be impoſſible. An ambitious man will not ſearch hiſtory for an example of ambition that was deteſted; and whoever ſhall read the tragical end of Cæſar, will be taught to dread the conſequences of tyranny.

Men endeavour to conceal the wickedneſs and depravity of the heart as much as they can; they act independent of example, and have no other end but that of aſſuaging their ungovernable paſſions. Beſide, if a raſcal wiſh to authoriſe his crimes by example, he has no need (be this ſaid to the honour of our age) to go back to the beginning of the world; the corrupted human race daily preſents ſuch as are recent, and which, therefore, have the greater force. In fine, it is only neceſſary to be man, to be able to judge of the wickedneſs of men, in all ages.

ages. That you ſhould not have made ſuch reflections is not aſtoniſhing.

In virtuous deeds thy ſoul delighting, knows
No good but that which Virtue's ſelf beſtows;
No other art haſt thou ſave that which binds
Th' impetuous paſſions of tyrannic minds;
Tranquil from heav'nly wiſdom thou look'ſt down
On human vice, as on a thing unknown!

Ceſario and the age of Louis the Great are not yet arrived, to allay my longing impatience; an embargo is laid on them by the gout. I grant we cannot enjoy all we wiſh in this life, though I hope my ſuſpicions will not continue long, and that this Jaſon will ſoon make me the poſſeſſor of the golden fleece, ſo much deſired and ſo long expected. I promiſe you all poſſible ſincerity and franknefs, in judging your works. My doubts are a kind of queſtions, which, from the juſtice you owe your works, will oblige you to inſtruct me.

I beg you to aſſure the incomparable Emily of the great eſteem I feel for her. But I perceive I conclude my letters by ſalutations to the ſiſters, like ſaint Paul, though I am well perſuaded that there was not, either in the Old or New Teſtament, a Jewefs of Idumæa who equalled in worth the hundredth part of Emily.

As

As to the eſteem, friendſhip, and conſideration I have for you, they will never end being, &c.

LETTER XLIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR February, 1738.

A DISORDER which has made the tour of France has at laſt come and ſeized on my weakly frame, in a caſtle which ought to be a ſhelter from all the plagues of the earth, ſince its inhabitants live under the auſpices *Divi Frederici et Divæ Emiliæ.* I was in bed when I received two letters at a time from your royal highneſs, which gave me great conſolation; the one by favour of M. Thiriot, on whom your royal highneſs has very juſtly beſtowed the epithet of trumpet, but who alſo is one of the trumpets of your renown; the other has travelled immediately according to its deſtination.

All thoſe with which, ſir, you have honoured me, have been ſo many benefits beſtowed, but the laſt has given me the moſt pleaſure; and, not

not merely becauſe it is the laſt, but becauſe you have judged the defects of Merope as if the life of your royal highneſs had been paſſed in frequenting our theatres. I and the ſublime Emily were ſpeaking on the ſubject, and were aſking whether the fear which Polifonte indicates in the fourth act, and the languor of the good old Narbas, with his deſire of ſelf preſervation, in the fifth, might not probably diſpleaſe your royal highneſs. The poſtman and the letters arrived, your criticiſm came, and we were enchanted! Ill as I was, what, ſir, do you imagine I immediately did? You may eaſily gueſs. I corrected theſe fourth and fifth acts.

I was a little too much in haſte to ſend it you, ſir. The deſire of preſenting my firſt fruits *Divo Frederico* did not permit me to wait till they were ripe; I therefore intreat you to conſider them as premature. They are at preſent almoſt fit to gather. I have made various alterations at the end of the ſecond, the end of the third, and the beginning and end of the fourth act, and have re-written almoſt half of the fifth. If your royal highneſs will permit me, I will either ſend you a copy of the four acts corrected, or only the altered paſſages.

I believe M. Thiriot will ſoon ſend your royal highneſs a new tragedy, which gives infinite

ſatisfaction at Paris. It is written by a man of nearly my own age, named la Chauſſée, who began to compoſe for the theatre rather late in life, as if he were determined to wait till his genius had acquired its full force. He has already written a comedy highly eſteemed, entitled *le Préjugé à la mode*, and an epiſtle to Clio, three parts of which are perfect in their kind. I hope much from his tragedy of Maximien; it will be an additional amuſement for Remuſberg; it will be read and approved by your royal highneſs, and I cannot wiſh it to be more fortunate.

You, ſir, are our judge. We are like the people of Elis, who did not think they had appointed honourable games unleſs they were approved in Egypt.

Your royal highneſs makes me ſhudder, while ſpeaking of what I ſuſpected of the czar. That man was unworthy to build cities; a tyger, who was the legiſlator of wolves.

Your royal highneſs has deigned to promiſe me the cantata of *le Couvreur*; let me intreat you to honour Cirey with this preſent; it is right that our pleaſures ſhould in part come from Remuſberg. I ſhall be in paradiſe when I liſten to my verſes, embelliſhed by your muſic, and ſung by Emily.

I wiſh

I wiſh all our trifling rhymers were to read what your royal highneſs has written to me on the ſtyle of Marot, and how ridiculous it is to expreſs thoſe things, by obſolete words, which do not deſerve to be expreſſed in any language. Greſſet does not fall into this error; his ſtyle is pure; ſome of his verſes are happy and eaſy; he only wants ſtrength, a little variety, and particularly to be more conciſe; for he uſually ſays that in ten lines which ought to be expreſſed in two; but your ſuperior underſtanding feels better than I can explain ſuch things.

I imagine that the baron von Kayſerling is at length returned to his polar ſtar, and that Louis XIV. and Newton have had ſentence paſſed. I wait the arrival of that ſentence to continue or to ſuſpend the hiſtory of the age of Louis XIV.

I am, with profound reſpect, and the moſt tender gratitude, *pariter cum Emilia, &c.*

LETTER XLV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, February 17th, 1738 *

I HAVE juſt received your letter of the 23d of January. It ſerves as an anſwer, or rather as a refutation to that of the 26th of December, which I wrote to you. I greatly repent having too lightly, and perhaps inconſiderately, engaged in a metaphyſical diſcuſſion with an adverſary who will beat me out of the field; but it is no longer time to retreat, after having proceeded thus far.

This occaſion brings to my remembrance a diſpute at which I was preſent, concerning the ſuperiority of the French or the Italian muſic. The perſon who maintained the part of the French began moſt miſerably to ſing an Italian air, affirming that it was the moſt abominable thing he had ever heard, in which aſſertion nobody contradicted him; he then deſired a perſon who ſung exceedingly well, and who ac-

* February 20th in the Berlin edition.

quitted

quitted himſelf miraculouſly, to pay all honour due to Lulli. Had the muſic of the two nations been to be judged by theſe ſpecimens, every body muſt certainly have condemned the Italian; and yet, in my opinion, every body would have been wrong. Are not metaphyſics, when handled by me, what an Italian air was ſung by this gentleman, who was not very learned? Be it as it may, I have your glory too much at heart to allow you have gained a victory without reſiſtance; you ſhall have the honour of having vanquiſhed an intrepid foe, who will employ every defence in his power, and expend his whole magazine of arguments before he will beat a retreat.

I perceive that the different manner in which we diſpute does but increaſe our diſtance in the ſyſtems which we ſupport. You argue *à poſteriori*; and I *à priori*; therefore, that we may proceed with more order, and avoid confuſion, in the profound darkneſs of metaphyſics which we are to diſpel, I believe it will be beſt to begin by eſtabliſhing a fixed principle: this will ſerve as a pole toward which our needle will always point; it ſhall be the centre in which all the lines of my reaſoning ſhall end.

I found all I have to ſay on the providence, the wiſdom, and the preſcience of God. Either

God is or is not wiſe; if he be wiſe, he muſt have left nothing to chance, he muſt have propoſed an end to himſelf, an end in every thing that he has done; and, hence his preſcience, his providence, and the doctrine of irrevocable fate.

If God be without wiſdom, he is no longer a God; he is an irrational being, a blind chance, a contradictory aſſemblage of attributes which cannot really exiſt.

Wiſdom, providence, and preſcience muſt neceſſarily, therefore, be the attributes of the Deity, and this will ſufficiently prove that God ſees effects in their cauſes; and that, as an omnipotent Being; his will accords with all he foreſees. Let us remark, as we go, that this deſtroys all future contingencies, with reſpect to God; for there can be no incertitude in futurity, relatively to an omniſcient Being, who wills all he can, and who can all he wills.

You will not think it improper that I ſhould anſwer the objections you have made to me. I ſhall follow the order you have obſerved, that, by the parallel, the truth may become the more evident. The freedom of man, as defined by you, cannot, according to my principle, have any adequate cauſe; for, as that freedom can only be derived from God, I will prove to you

that a contradiction is implied, and that, therefore, the thing is impoſſible.

I. God cannot change the eſſence of things; for, as impoſſible as it is for him to give four ſides to a triangle and ſtill preſerve it a triangle, or to prevent what is paſt having been, equally impoſſible is it for him to change his proper eſſence. Now it is a part of his eſſence (as a wiſe omnipotent Deity, acquainted with the future) to fix the events which muſt happen through all ages. He cannot give man the freedom to act in a manner diametrically oppoſite to what he once has willed: the reſult of which is, that it is a contradiction to affirm God can beſtow freedom on man.

II. Man thinks, gives himſelf motion, and acts, I allow; but it is in a manner ſubordinate to the immutable laws of fate. All had been foreſeen by the Deity, and all regulated; but man, who is ignorant of the future, does not perceive that, in ſeeming to act with independency, all his actions tend to fulfil the decrees of Providence.

Here freedom haughty ſlave impriſon'd lies,
By magic chains inviſible confin'd:
Beneath a yoke unknown, which nought can break,
Jehovah him ſans tyranny ſubjects *.

* Henriade.

III. I will own I was dazzled by the beginning of your third objection, and ſurpriſed to behold a deceitful God ariſing out of my own ſyſtem. But we muſt examine whether this God deceive us ſo much as our opponents would have it believed. It is not an infinitely wiſe, an infinitely conſiſtent Being, who impoſes upon his creatures by a feigned freedom, which he ſeems to have beſtowed. He does not ſay to them you are free, you may act according to your will, &c. but he has thought proper to conceal the ſprings by which they are actuated from their ſight. The effect of the paſſions is not here the queſtion; for this effect is entirely open to our examination. On the contrary, we have expreſsly to enquire what the motives are which determine our will. Theſe we ſhould find to be an idea of happineſs which we figure to ourſelves, or of advantage which we hope to obtain; and this ſuppoſition is the rule of all the acts of our will.

Thus, for example, a thief would not ſteal, if he did not imagine to himſelf happineſs in the poſſeſſion of the property on which he means to ſeize; a miſer would not heap gold on gold, if he did not enjoy imaginary happineſs in collecting all this wealth; a general would not expoſe his life, if he did not find happineſs in the idea

of

of the glory he might acquire, in the rank he might attain, or in the rewards he had reaſon to expect. In a word, men are governed wholly by the ideas they entertain of what may be to their advantage and welfare.

IV. I think I have ſufficiently ſhewn the contradiction which is encountered in the ſyſtem of free deciſion, as well relatively to the perfections of God as to what daily experience teaches us of ourſelves. You will allow with me that the leaſt actions of life originate in a certain principle, in the idea of advantage which ſtrikes us, and which are called rational motives. Theſe, according to me, form the momentum and the counterpoiſe, which give motion to all the machines on earth; theſe are the hidden ſprings which it has pleaſed God to employ, that he might ſubject our actions to his ſupreme will: the temperaments of men, and occaſional cauſes, both equally ſubſervient to the divine will, afterward give modifications to the will of man, and are the origin of that remarkable difference which we obſerve in his actions.

V. It ſeems to me that the revolutions of the celeſtial bodies, and the order to which all thoſe worlds are ſubjected, might ſupply me with another very ſtrong argument in ſupport of abſo-

lute

lute neceſſity. A ſmall knowledge of aſtronomy will teach us the infinite regularity with which the planets perform their courſes. We are further informed of the laws of gravity, attraction, and motion, which are all the immutable laws of nature.

If bodies of this kind, if worlds, if ſyſtems, are ſubjected to fixed and permanent laws, how will Clarke and Newton afterward affirm that a being ſo ſmall, ſo imperceptible comparatively to ſyſtems ſo vaſt; what do I ſay? a wretched reptile; which crawls on the ſurface of the earth; which is but a point in the univerſe; a miſerable creature; ſhall he alone have the right to act by chance, to be governed by no law, and, in deſpite of his Creator, to determine on his actions without reaſon? For, whoever maintains the entire freedom of man, poſitively denies man to be a reaſonable creature, and that he is governed according to the principles which I have above alleged: this is an evident falſity, to be convinced of which we need but be acquainted with you.

VI. Having already anſwered your ſixth objection, it is ſufficient, here, for me to repeat that God, not being able to change the eſſence of things, is conſequently unable to deprive himſelf of his attributes.

VII. Having

VII. Having proved that it would be contradictory in God to beſtow freedom of action on man, it would be ſuperfluous to anſwer to the ſeventh objection; though I cannot help, in the name of Wolf and Leibnitz, obſerving to Clarke and Newton, that a God who, in the government of the world, attends to the ſmalleſt particulars, directs all the actions of men, at the ſame time that he provides for the wants of a number of worlds, which he ſupports, appears to me much more admirable than a God who, like the grandees of Spain, addicted to indolence, remains unemployed. What indeed would become of the immenſity of God, were we, that we might give him eaſe, to deprive him of all theſe ſmall cares? I repeat, the ſyſtem of Wolf explains the motives of the actions of men conformable to the attributes of God, and to the authority of experience.

VIII. With reſpect to the violent emotions and paſſions of men, theſe are ſprings we are obliged to remark, for they viſibly appear to the ſenſes; yet the others do not leſs exiſt; though, in order to diſcover them, greater application of mind and longer meditation are requiſite.

IX. Deſire and will are two things which muſt not be confounded I will grant; but the triumph of the will over the deſire proves nothing

thing in favour of freedom. This triumph, on the contrary, only proves that an idea of glory, which we imagine to ourſelves when we ſuppreſs the deſire, an idea of pride, and alſo ſentiments of prudence, have determined us to conquer the deſire; which is equivalent to the principle I before eſtabliſhed.

X. Since without God the world could not have been created, as you allow, and ſince I have proved that man is not free, it follows that, there being a God, there is an abſolute neceſſity; and, there being an abſolute neceſſity, man muſt conſequently be ſubjected to it, and cannot enjoy freedom.

While we ſpeak on man, all compariſons derived from man may be applied; but, when we ſpeak of God, if I am not deceived, all ſuch compariſons become falſe, ſince we then attribute to him human ideas; we make him act like a man, and entirely oppoſite to his divine majeſty.

Shall I proceed to refute the ſyſtem of the Socinians, having ſufficiently eſtabliſhed my own? As ſoon as it is demonſtrated that God is incapable of acting contrary to his eſſence, we may draw the conſequence that all reaſoning which tends to prove the freedom of man muſt ever continue falſe. The ſyſtem of Wolf

is

is founded on the attributes which it is demonſtrated God poſſeſſes; the contrary ſyſtem has no other baſis than ſuppoſition; and, as it is certain that the firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions is evidently falſe, you will comprehend that all the others fall of themſelves.

That I may leave nothing to reſume, it is neceſſary I ſhould make you remark an inconſiſtency which I find in the pleaſure which God takes in ſeeing free creatures act. We do not perceive that we judge of all things by a certain application to ourſelves. Thus, for example, becauſe a man takes pleaſure in contemplating a laborious republic of ants, providing, with a kind of wiſdom, for their ſubſiſtence, we imagine that God muſt take the ſame pleaſure in contemplating the actions of men. We do not perceive, while we reaſon thus, that pleaſure is a human paſſion, that God is not man, but that he is perfectly happy in himſelf, and is neither ſuſceptible of joy, ſorrow, love, hatred, nor of any of the paſſions which diſturb the tranquillity of mankind.

It is indeed affirmed that God ſees the paſt, the preſent, and the future; that he does not grow old with time, and that the preſent moment, months, years, or millions of years, effect no change in his being, and can have no more

comparison to his duration, which has neither beginning nor end, than to an instant; less even than to the twinkling of the eye.

I own to you that the God of Mr. Clarke made me laugh heartily; he is certainly a God who frequents coffee-houses, and makes political conjectures on the present events of Europe, in company with miserable news-mongers. He must, at this moment, be exceedingly embarrassed to divine what will be the fate of the approaching campaign in Hungary, and must impatiently wait till such events are past, to know whether he has or has not been deceived in his conjectures.

I shall add but one reflection to what I have said; which is, that neither freedom of determination nor absolute necessity disinculpate the Deity from the participation of guilt; for, whether God give us the freedom to do ill, or induce us immediately to the commission of ill, it amounts to nearly the same thing; it is only something more or something less. Examine the origin of evil, and you can only attribute it to God; unless you will embrace the opinion of the Manichæans, who hold two principles, a good and an evil; and this is equally surrounded with difficulties.

Since, therefore, according to our systems, God is alike the father of virtue and of vice, since

ſince neither Clarke, Locke, nor Newton, offer any thing which conciliate the ſanctity of God with the author of guilt, I am obliged to perſiſt in my ſyſtem; it is moſt connected, moſt conſiſtent; and I find a kind of conſolation in that abſolute neceſſity by which all is directed, which induces us to act, and which fixes fate. You will tell me, it is a poor conſolation which is obtained from reflecting on our miſery, and the immutability of our deſtiny. This I allow, but we muſt be ſatisfied with that conſolation, for want of a better. It reſembles thoſe remedies which give eaſe to pain, and leave nature time to accompliſh a cure.

After having ſhewn you what my opinions are, I now, like you, come to the inſufficiency of our knowledge. It appears to me that men were not formed to reaſon profoundly on abſtract ſubjects. God has inſtructed them, as much as it was neceſſary for them to be inſtructed to guide themſelves in the world, but not as much as was requiſite to ſatisfy their curioſity. Man is made to act, and not to meditate.

Underſtand me to be what you pleaſe, ſir, provided you will but believe you are perſonally the ſtrongeſt argument that can be offered me in favour of man, as a being. I have a more advantageous idea of the perfection of

human

human nature while I consider you, and am the more persuaded that nothing but a God, or something divine, was able to assemble in the same person all the perfections you possess. You are not governed by independent ideas; you act according to principle, according to the most sublime reason; therefore, you act according to necessity.

This system, far from being contrary to humanity and the virtues, is very favourable to them; since, finding our interest, our happiness, and our satisfaction to consist in the exercise of virtue, it becomes necessity in us always to incline to act virtuously; and, as I cannot be ungrateful without becoming insupportable to myself, my happiness, my repose, and the idea of my own welfare oblige me to gratitude.

I allow men do not always pursue virtue; but that is because they do not all form the same ideas concerning happiness. External causes, or their passions, induce them to conduct themselves after different manners, and according as they imagine it to be their interest, in moments when the tumult of the passions overstep the cool deliberations of reason.

You will perceive, sir, by what I have said, my metaphysical opinions by no means overturn the principles of good morality; especially

ſince the pureſt reaſon teaches us to diſcover our only and our true intereſt in the preſervation of this ſound morality.

In other reſpects, I treat my ſyſtem as good children do their parents; they know but they conceal their defects. I ſhew you one ſide of a picture, but I am not ignorant that the other may be turned. We may diſpute for ages on ſuch kind of ſubjects, and after having exhauſted them, as it may be ſaid, we return to the point from which we departed. We ſoon come to the aſs of Buridan *.

I cannot often enough tell you, ſir, how delighted I am with your franknes. Your ſincerity merits no ſmall praiſe; by this you convince me you are one of my friends, that your mind loves the truth, and that you will never conceal it from me. Be perſuaded, ſir, that your friendſhip and approbation are more flattering to me than that of half the human race would be. With Cicero I ſay to myſelf

"The gods are Cæſar's; Cato is for Pompey."

* Buridan was a famous doctor of the fourteenth century, in the univerſity of Paris, who, probably, from his name having become proverbial in France, firſt maintained the aſſertion that an aſs placed between two bundles of hay, equally attractive, would die with hunger; becauſe he would be unable to chooſe. T.

Were I in company with the divine Emily, I ſhould tell her—" You are bleſſed among wo-
" men, for you poſſeſs one of the greateſt men
" on earth."—I ſhould further add—" Emily
" has choſen the good part, ſhe has choſen
" philoſophy."

You certainly, ſir, were neceſſary to my happineſs in this world. You have ſent me two epiſtles which never had their equal. And ſhall it continually be ſaid that you ſurpaſs yourſelf? I have not judged the epiſtles you have ſent me as a philoſophic theme, but have conſidered them as works woven by the hands of the Graces. You have robbed Virgil of his fame as an epic poet, have ſurpaſſed Corneille in tragedy, and you are now ſurpaſſing the epiſtles of Boileau. It muſt be owned you are a man to be feared. Yours is the monarchy which Nebuchadnezzar ſaw in a dream, and which ſwallowed up all that had gone before.

I conclude by intreating you will not long ſuffer the charming epiſtles you have ſent me to remain ſolitary, but that you will ſend their companions; I wait for them with the utmoſt impatience, and that avidity with which all your works inſpire the reader. Philoſophy proves you are the man on earth moſt worthy my eſteem; my heart induces me and gratitude

tude obliges me to credit the proofs; judge, therefore, of the ſentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, February 19, 1738 *.

I HAVE juſt received the letter you wrote to me dated January the 22d; I there ſee with what tenderneſs you endeavour to excuſe my faults, and with what ſincerity you wiſh to point them out to me. You condeſcend for a while to quit the heaven of Newton, and the delightful company of the Muſes, that you may aid in waſhing a poet who is newly plunged into the ſportive waters of Hippocrene. You quit the pencil, and, in my behalf, take up the burniſher; nay you even take the trouble to teach me to ſpell, you who ſo well know how to think. Yet I am about to importune you once more; though I fear you will ſuppoſe me to be one of

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

thoſe people, by whom, having once given them alms, we are continually teazed.

Madame du Chatelet has addreſſed verſes to me, which, from their beauty, their dignity, and their original turn, have incited my admiration. I was at the ſame time very much aſtoniſhed to perceive myſelf there called divine; I know, for the ſame reaſons as Alexander knew, that I am not of celeſtial origin; and I very much fear that, as a God, my fate will be ſimilar to that ſwarm of new deities who Lucian tells us were driven out of heaven by Jupiter; or like the ſaints which the ſieur de Launoy thought proper to diſplace from Paradiſe.

Be this as it may, I have replied in verſe to the marchioneſs du Chatelet, and I intreat you, ſir, to impart ſome finiſhing ſtroke to the piece, that it may be worthy of being preſented to Emily. This Emily I regard as a deity of ancient times, whom we are not permitted to addreſs in human language. We muſt deliver ourſelves in the language of the gods, and addreſs her in verſe. But mere mortals muſt be allowed to ſtammer when they endeavour to ſpeak a tongue ſo unknown. For this reaſon I hope you deities will excuſe the errors of us poor mortals, when we pretend to ſpeak in your language. I expect a thunder-bolt ſhould be hurled,

hurled, by the Jupiter of Cirey, against a certain metaphysical essay, which I have ventured to send. I exerted myself to the utmost that I might rise to the heaven of metaphysics; I waved my arms, and imagined I flew; but, do all I can, I perfectly feel the nature of my mind is such as to disable me from surmounting every difficulty I encounter in the career. The Creator seems to have given us sufficient reason to act with prudence in this world, and to provide for our wants; but this reason does not seem adequate to satisfy the insatiable fund of curiosity which we bring with us, and which often extends too far. The absurdities and contradictions we every where meet with continually give birth to scepticism; and, by heating the imagination, we at length consult nothing but imagination.

There is one thing which I hold to be an incontestable truth, and that is the pleasure and admiration which you incite in me. This is no illusion of the senses, this is no frivolous prejudice, but a perfect knowledge of the most amiable man on earth. I am, with all possible esteem,

SIR,

Your very faithful affectionate friend.

P. S. I am going to erase every asterisk, and to correct, change, and labour, till I have conformed to all your remarks. Merope shall not quit my possession. She is a virgin, of whose honour I have taken charge.

LETTER XLVII.

From the Prince Royal:

SIR, February 27th, 1738 *.

YOUR works are invaluable: this is a truth of which I have long been convinced, but which does not prevent me from being highly in your debt. The trifles I send you are but marks of remembrance, tokens which ought to make you recollect the pleasure I have received from your writings. It should seem, sir, that the arts and sciences serve you periodically. The present quarter appears to be that of poetry. You have lately finished a new tragedy. Where do you find time? Or, do you write verse with the same ease as you do prose? Every

* Dated February 26th, 1737, in the Berlin edition.

question

queſtion is a problem. Either you muſt bend day and night over your labours, or Heaven muſt have granted you, beſide the excellent talents you poſſeſs, a facility which is wholly extraordinary.

Merope ſhall not quit my poſſeſſion; in this my ſelf-love is too much intereſted, I being the ſole poſſeſſor of a piece written by you. I prefer it to all the tragedies which have appeared in France, the death of Cæſar excepted. Love intrigues appear to me proper for comedy, of which they are, as it were, the eſſence; they form the knot that is to be untied; and, as the play muſt end in ſome manner, marriage ſeems to me to be a very proper one.

As to tragedy, I ſhould ſay there are tragic ſubjects which naturally require the author to treat on the paſſion of love. Such are Titus and Berenice; the Cid; and Phædra and Hippolytus. The only inconvenience is that love is too like itſelf; and, having ſeen twenty plays, the mind is diſguſted by the continual repetition of the ſame honeyed ſpeeches, which are too far removed from the manners of our age. Since, with good reaſon, a degree of ridicule has been affixed to romantic love, the pathos of extravagant tenderneſs is no longer felt; its whining is ſupportable during the firſt act, but

we feel ourſelves very much inclined to laugh at its ſimplicity in the fourth or fifth.

The paſſion which animates Merope, on the contrary, ſpeaks with the voice of nature, and with ſenſations common to all hearts. We do not mock at that which we ourſelves feel, or at that which we are capable of feeling. Merope acts exactly as a tender mother would act, who ſhould happen to be in her ſituation. She ſpeaks to our hearts, and the actor expreſſes nothing more than what is felt by every body.

I have written to Berlin for the Merope of the marquis Maffei; though I am well convinced his tragedy does not approach yours in excellence. The men of literature in France will ever remain invincible, while there are perſons of your order at their head; I dare even affirm that I ſhould think them infinitely more formidable than your armies, led by all your marſhals.

I here ſend you an ode lately finiſhed, but not ſo bad as the preceding. Ceſario was the cauſe that it was written: the poor youth had an exceſſive fit of the gout, and wrote to me in language which pierced me to the ſoul. I could do nothing for him but preach patience; a feeble remedy, I grant, againſt real evil, yet a remedy capable of pacifying the impetuous ſallies of

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the mind, to which acute pains give birth. That you will correct the defects which you will perceive in this ode is what I expect from your candour and friendſhip. I feel I am the father of it, yet ſhould be angry with myſelf were I incapable of ſeeing the defects of my own offſpring.

So much is error our inheritance,
That, be the poet madman, be he ſage,
By ſelf-love flatter'd, dazzled, and deceiv'd,
Unable to withhold his own applauſe,
Each line he writes ſome new-born beauties ſpring.

You will not forget to repeat the high eſteem I have for the marchioneſs du Chatelet, whoſe ingenious wit diſcovers itſelf by a ſhort ſpecimen. It is a ray of the ſun which darts through the clouds. But why does it not ſhine out? Perhaps the marchioneſs is obliged to veil her mind, as Moſes did his countenance, becauſe the people of Iſrael were unable to ſupport its brightneſs. But, though I ſhould be ſtruck blind, I muſt, before I die, behold this land of Canaan, this country of the ſages, this terreſtrial paradiſe.

Be certain of the perfect eſteem, and inviolable friendſhip, with which I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, March 8, 1738.

THE moſt zealous of your admirers is not the moſt induſtrious of your correſpondents; and the reaſon of this is he is the oftneſt ill, and is ſeized by a fever when he wiſhes to paſs the moſt agreeable hours of life, in writing to your royal highneſs.

We received your excellent proſe, of the 19th of February, and your verſes for the marchioneſs du Chatelet, who bluſhes, is charmed, and who knows not how to reply to arts ſo ſeductive. We alſo received, with your letter of the 27th, the ode on patience, with which the royal muſe alleviates the ſufferings of the baron von Kayſerling. By this ode I have myſelf profited; it agrees well with the preſent languid ſtate of my health. The remedy was as effectual for me as for your gouty patient, for I hold myſelf to be his equal in philoſophy. Like him, I feel the value of your poetry, and like him find a charm againſt all ills, in the letter of your royal highneſs.

To patience you exhort your friend,
In lines ſo eloquently penn'd,
That patience, when your works we read,
We ſurely never leſs can need *.

Since you deign, ſir, to employ your leiſure in the delights of poetry, I here take the liberty to ſend you the third epiſtle on happineſs, the ſubject of which is envy, a paſſion with which I ardently deſire your royal highneſs ſhould inſpire all ſovereigns.

I ſend you my verſes, and you, ſir, return me yours; this reminds me of the perpetual traffic Heſiod ſays ſubſiſts between heaven and earth: the earth ſends up vapours, and the gods return refreſhing dews. Infinite thanks, ſir, for your dew: but my poor ground will very ſoon lie fallow. Diſeaſe ruins my conſtitution, and ſoon will render mine a barren field. But my laſt fruits ſhall be for you.

Extremum hunc, Arethuſa, mihi concede laborem,
Pauca Frederico.

I have, however, written two new acts, in bed, inſtead of the two laſt acts of Merope,

* Here is a proof (of which many more might be given, in contradiction to the rule of Addiſon) that puns are ſometimes capable of being tranſlated. T.

which

which I thought too languid. Whenever your royal highneſs wiſhes to ſee the produce of your own advice, in theſe new acts, I will do myſelf the honour to ſend them. I have it much at heart to give the world a tragedy which is not embelliſhed by any love intrigue, and which deſerves to be read. I ſhall thus render ſome ſervice to the French theatre, which, in reality, is too gallant. The play is without love. Thus, the firſt piece I do myſelf the honour to ſend to Remuſberg will merit to have for its title *De remedio amoris*.

I certainly have a very profound reſpect for love, and all that appertains to love; but that this ſovereign ſhould entirely monopolize tragedy is uſurpation; and I will at leaſt *proteſt* againſt uſurpation, not being able to do better. This, ſir, is all I have to ſay at preſent, on the poetic department; but, with reſpect to that of metaphyſics, I am greatly embarraſſed.

The letter of your royal highneſs, dated February 17th, is in truth a maſter-piece. I regard your two letters on freedom among the ſtrongeſt, beſt connected, and moſt conſiſtent eſſays I have met with on the ſubject. You certainly are highly indebted to nature, for having endowed you with a genius which raiſes you to monarchy in the intellectual world, before

you

you become a monarch in this miſerable world of paſſion, grimace, and ſhew.

I hold the opinion of neceſſity in great reſpect, though it is not my own; for, while ſwimming in a ſea of incertitude, and catching only at a ſtraw, I ſhall take good care not to reproach my brother navigators with the weakneſs of that ſtraw at which they catch; and I ſhould be very glad, ſhould my reed break, if my neighbour could lend me his. I have a much higher reſpect for the opinion I have controverted, now your royal highneſs has diſplayed it in ſo fair a point of view. Will you permit me once more to ſtate my doubts?

That I may not weary the Marcus Aurelius of Germany, I ſhall confine myſelf to two ideas which make a ſtrong impreſſion on me, and concerning which I requeſt information.

I. The more I examine myſelf, the more, in various caſes, I believe myſelf to be free. This is an opinion common to all men, as well as to myſelf; for it is the invariable principle of our conduct. The moſt determined partiſans of neceſſity all guide themſelves according to the principles of freedom. Now, I aſk how they are able to reaſon and act in ſo contrary a manner; and what they will gain by conſidering themſelves as turnſpits, when they always be-

have

have as if they were not in the wheel? I once more aſk, what is the reaſon that the Author of nature has given us this ſuppoſition of freedom, if it do not exiſt? Speak truly; is there any ſolution to this problem? Is it not an evaſion to reply, God has not ſaid you are free? God undoubtedly has not ſaid we are free, for God does not deign to ſpeak to us; but he has impreſſed our hearts with a feeling which nothing can enfeeble; and this feeling is to us the voice of God. All our other ſenſations are true. He does not deceive us in the deſire we have to be happy, to eat, drink, and propagate our ſpecies. When we feel deſires, thoſe deſires certainly exiſt; when we are ſenſible of pleaſure, we are well aſſured we do not feel pain; when we ſee, it is beyond diſpute that the action of ſeeing is not that of hearing; when we have thoughts, it is very clear that we think; and ſhall the ſenſation we have of freedom be the only one in which a being, infinitely perfect, ſhall ſport with us, by deceiving us with an abſurd illuſion? What! When I confeſs that a derangement of my organs deprives me of freedom, do I not deceive myſelf; and yet am I deceived when I ſay I am free?

I know not whether this unadorned explanation of what paſſes within us will make any

impreſſion on your philoſophic mind; but I conjure you, ſir, to examine the idea, to allow it its whole extent, and afterward to judge it without reſpect to party, and even without conſidering other more metaphyſical principles, which militate againſt this moral proof. You will then ſee which ought to be preferred; a moral proof, which exiſts in all men, or metaphyſical ideas, which ever bear the character of incertitude.

II. My ſecond doubt turns on a more philoſophic view of the queſtion. I perceive that all which has ever been ſaid, againſt the freedom of man, applies, with ſtill increaſing force, againſt the freedom of God.

If it be ſaid, God has foreſeen all our actions, and that for that cauſe they are neceſſary; God has alſo foreſeen his own, which are ſo much the more neceſſary as God is immutable. If it be urged, man cannot act without an adequate cauſe, which cauſe directs his will; the adequate cauſe ought to have ſtill greater power over the will of God, who is a being ſupremely reaſonable.

If it be affirmed, man muſt *choose* that which appears to him to be the beſt, God is under a ſtill greater neceſſity to *perform* that which is the beſt.

Here

Here then we find God become the ſlave of Fate. He is no longer a being who determines for himſelf, he is determined by ſome external cauſe; he is no longer an agent, no longer a God.

But, if God be free, as the neceſſitarians themſelves muſt confeſs, why could not God communicate a portion of that freedom to man, in communicating to him being, thought, motion, and will, all which are equally unknown? Was it more difficult for God to beſtow freedom on us than to beſtow the power of walking, eating, and digeſting? A demonſtration is neceſſary, in order to prove that God could not communicate the attribute of freedom to man; and, to obtain this demonſtration, it is requiſite to know the attributes of the Divinity. But who knows thoſe attributes?

It is ſaid that God, by giving us freedom, would have made man a deity. On what ground is this ſaid? Why ſhould I be a God, with a portion of freedom, who am not a God, with a portion of intelligence? To be poſſeſſed of feeble power, confined and temporary, to chooſe and to begin motion, is this to be a God? There is no medium; either we are automata, who do nothing, and in whom God does all, or we are agents; that is to ſay, free creatures.

I demand

I demand proof that we are ſimple automata, and that our interior ſenſation of freedom is an illuſion.

All the proofs that are brought are reduced to the preſcience of God. But, is it preciſely known what this preſcience is? No, of that we are certainly ignorant. How, therefore, can we employ our ignorance on the ſupreme attributes of God, to prove the falſity of a real ſenſation; that is, of the freedom which we feel in ourſelves?

I cannot conceive any congruity between preſcience and freedom, I allow; but muſt I therefore reject freedom? Muſt I deny that I am a thinking being, becauſe I cannot perceive how matter can think, nor how a thinking being can be the ſlave of matter? To reaſon *a priori*, as it is called, is a very fine thing, but it is a mode of reaſoning to which man is incompetent. We are on the banks of a large river; and we muſt aſcend the ſtream, before we venture to ſpeak of its ſource.

It certainly would be very fortunate, if we could eſtabliſh clear, indubitable, and numerous principles of metaphyſics; whence an infinite number of conſequences might be derived, as in mathematics. But God has not willed that the thing ſhould be thus. The patrimony of meta-

phyſics he has reſerved to himſelf. The reign of pure ideas and of the eſſence of things is his own. If any one has participated this celeſtial inheritance, it is certainly you, ſir; and my heart will ſay of you what paraſites ſay of kings, when they tell them, they are the images of the Deity.

With reſpect to the verſes, which you have deigned to cite from the Henriade, they were only written with an intent to ſay that our freedom does not injure the divine preſcience, which conſtitutes what we call fate. I have expreſſed myſelf ſomewhat looſely in that paſſage, but we cannot always preciſely ſay what we wiſh to ſay in poetry: the wheel runs round, and hurries away the man by its rapidity.

Before I conclude, permit me to inform your royal highneſs that the Socinians, who deny the preſcience of God relative to contingencies, poſſeſs a great apoſtle, with whom perhaps they are unacquainted. I ſpeak of Cicero, in his book of divination. That great man was better pleaſed to rob the Gods of their preſcience than men of their freedom.

Superior as he was, as an orator, I do not believe he could have anſwered your objections. He would in vain have made long periods; it would only have been ſound contending with truth.

truth. But here let us leave him and his fine phrases.

Permit me to observe to your royal highness that the Gods of Cicero and the God of Newton and of Clarke are not of the same species. We may well say of the former that they were Gods reasoning in coffee-houses, on the operations of the ensuing campaign; for whoever possesses no prescience can but conjecture, and whoever can do nothing better than conjecture is liable to say as many silly things as the London journal, or the Dutch gazette. But not so Sir Isaac Newton and Samuel Clarke; who individually were as philosophic as Tully was loquacious.

Dr. Clarke, who has examined these subjects deeply, of which Newton only spoke occasionally, says, as I think with reason, that we are unable to ascend toward an imperfect knowledge of the divine attributes, except as from a given number we ascend toward infinites, proceeding from the known toward the unknown.

Each mode of perception, limited and finite in man, is infinite in God. The mind of man can only contemplate one object at a time, but God embraces all. From our knowledge of the character of a man, we foresee how that man will act on a given occasion; and God foresees, by the same kind of knowledge infinitely ex-

tended, how that man will act. Thus, what is in us the ſcience of conjecture, and which does not militate againſt freedom, is in God the ſcience of certainty, which is as little militant as the former. This manner of reaſoning does not appear to me to be very ridiculous.

But I perceive, ſir, how ardent I am to weary you with my ideas; neither do I do any thing more than enfeeble the ideas of others. Your goodneſs only gives me courage. I find your heart to be as humane as your mind is extenſive. In your verſes to the baron von Kayſerling, I read how capable you are of friendſhip; for which reaſon my fourth epiſtle on happineſs ſhall conclude with friendſhip, for without that there is no happineſs on earth.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet admires you ſo highly that ſhe dares not write to you; I muſt therefore be very adventurous, ſir; I, who certainly do not admire you leſs, and who yet am a never-ending babbler.

Why am not I allowed to addreſs you thus—?

In publica commoda peccem,
Si longo ſermone morer tua tempora, Cæſar.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, attachment, and gratitude unbounded, &c.

LET-

LETTER XLIX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Remuſberg, March 28, 1738.*

I RECEIVED your letter of the 8th of this month with a kind of inquietude concerning your health. Thiriot informed me it was not good, and this you have confirmed. It ſeems that Nature, who has beſtowed mental endowments ſo great upon you, has acted the ſtepmother with reſpect to your health; as if ſhe herſelf regretted that ſhe had accompliſhed a perfect work. The infirmities of the body only could lead you to preſume you were mortal; your works muſt perſuade you to the contrary. The great men of antiquity were never more in dread of the implacable malice of fortune than after remarkable ſucceſs. Your fever may be eſtimated in this manner as an equivalent, or as a counterpoiſe, to your Merope.

May I flatter myſelf that I have divined the corrections you have thought proper to make in your piece? You, a ſevere father, have aſſumed

* March the 7th in the Berlin edition.

the character of Brutus. For my own part, although I have not written it, nor have any other intereſt in it than that which I feel for the author, I have twice read Merope with all the attention of which I am capable, without perceiving any defects. Your works reſemble the ſun, to diſcover the ſpots in which the eye muſt be very piercing.

Be kind enough to ſend me the four acts corrected, as you have given me to hope; otherwiſe eraſures and corrections will render my copy confuſed, and difficult to decypher. Boileau and all the poets only could attain perfection by correcting. It is to be regretted that men, however great their talents may be, cannot produce excellence at a firſt eſſay; they acquire it only by degrees: it is neceſſary inceſſantly to efface, correct, and improve, and every ſtep they make is the ſtep of chaſtiſement. Virgil, the prince of poetry, was employed in correcting his Æneid when he was overtaken by death. He, no doubt, was deſirous his work ſhould be as perfect as it exiſted in his own imagination, and which equalled that of the orator deſcribed by Cicero.

I have not yet received the Maximien of La Chauſſée. I have ſeen the School for Friends, written by the ſame author, the title of which is excellent,

excellent, but the writing is common-place, feeble, monotonous, and languid. Perhaps it is ſome temerity in me, who am a foreigner, and almoſt a barbarian, to judge of French plays; ſtill, whatever is dry or ſluggiſh preſently gives diſguſt.

We ſelect the beſt French pieces to perform here. My memory is ſo indifferent that I am very difficult in the choice of the materials with which it is neceſſary it ſhould be ſtored; it is like a ſmall garden, in which we do not ſow every kind of ſeed with indifference, but embelliſh it with none but the moſt rare and exquiſite flowers.

By the pieces which I ſend you will judge of the fruits of my retreat and your inſtructions. Let me intreat you to redouble your ſincerity, reſpecting all which comes from me. I have leiſure, patience, and, in addition, nothing better to do than to alter thoſe paſſages in my works which you think deſerve reproof.

The life of the czarina and the czarowitz is at preſent writing. I hope I ſhall ſoon be able to ſend you whatever I can collect on this ſubject; among the anecdotes you will find barbarities and cruelties ſimilar to thoſe of which we read in the hiſtory of the firſt Cæſars. Ruſſia was a country into which the arts and ſciences

had not penetrated. The czar had no tincture of humanity, magnanimity, or virtue; he had been educated in the loweſt ignorance, and acted only according to the impulſe of his irregular paſſions. So true is it that inclination leads men to ill; and that they are good only in proportion as education, or experience, may have moderated the impetuoſity of their temperament.

I was acquainted with the grand marſhal of the court (of Pruſſia) Printz, who was alive in 1724, and who, under the reign of the late king, had been our envoy in Ruſſia. He informed me that, when he came to Peterſburg, he demanded permiſſion to preſent his credentials, and that he was taken on board a ſhip, which was then on the ſtocks. Little accuſtomed to ſuch an audience, he aſked where was the czar; and the monarch was pointed out to him, buſied in managing the tackling on deck. When the czar perceived the ambaſſador, he deſired him to come to him by aſcending a rope ladder; and, when he excuſed himſelf, alleging his awkwardneſs, the czar came ſliding down a rope to him like a ſailor.

The commiſſion of the ambaſſador being very agreeable to the monarch, the latter was deſirous of giving him ſome evident token of his ſatisfaction.

ſatisfaction. For this purpoſe, he ordered a ſumptuous feſtival, to which M. von Printz was invited. The gueſts drank brandy to brutal exceſs, after the manner of the Ruſſians; and the czar, willing to give a peculiar kind of relief to the ſcene, ſent for about twenty of the Strelitz (guards) who were confined in the priſons of Peterſburg, and, at the emptying of each glaſs, the intolerable monſter beheaded one of theſe wretches. That he might afford a particular mark of reſpect to the ambaſſador, this unnatural prince, in order, according to his mode of ſpeaking, to give him the pleaſure of ſhewing his addreſs, propoſed he ſhould partake of the office of executioner. Imagine what effect ſuch a propoſition muſt produce on a man poſſeſſed of ſenſibility, and goodneſs of heart! M. von Printz, whoſe feelings were as acute as thoſe of any perſon whatever, refuſed an offer which in any other place would have been regarded as an inſult to the character of an ambaſſador, but which, in this barbarous country, was merely a proof of civility. The czar was ſo vexed at his refuſal that he could not forbear betraying ſigns of his indignation; though he thought proper to make reparation on the morrow.

This is no invented tale; it is ſo true that it

is

is found in the relations of M. von Printz, which are preſerved in the archives. I have even ſpoken with ſeveral perſons who were at Peterſburg at this period, and who atteſted the truth of the fact. It is, therefore, not the tale of two or three individuals, but a notorious event.

From cruelties ſo horrible, let us revert to a ſubject more cheerful, gay, and agreeable; which ſhall be the after-piece to the tragedy.

I allude to the poetical productions of Greſſet, who at preſent is one of the firſt of the French writers. This charming poet has the gift of expreſſing himſelf with much facility. His epithets are juſt and new, and he has turns which are peculiar to himſelf. We love his works in deſpite of their defects. He is not ſufficiently careful, beyond diſpute; and his indolence, which he praiſes ſo highly, is the greateſt enemy of his fame. He has written an ode on the love of our country, which pleaſes me infinitely. It is full of ardour, and finiſhed paſſages. You muſt have remarked that this poet is more ſucceſsful in writing verſes of eight ſyllables than of twelve.

Notwithſtanding the goodneſs of the ſhort pieces of Greſſet, I do not believe he will ever write with effect for the theatre, or as an epic

poet.

poet. Flaſhes of wit are not alone ſufficient for compoſitions of ſuch extent; energy, vigour, with a penetrating and ripened underſtanding, are requiſite.

The cantata of *le Couvreur* is copying, according to your wiſhes; I ſhall ſend it to be ſhipwrecked on the ſhores of Cirey. French ears, accuſtomed to vauderilles and anthems, are but little favourable to the methodical and expreſſive airs of the Italians. Muſicians, to execute this piece in the taſte in which it is written, are neceſſary, without whom it will appear juſt as affecting to you as the part of Brutus would, if recited by a Swiſs or Auſtrian actor.

Let me intreat you to recollect that it is ſome time ſince you ſent me the two firſt of the four moral epiſtles, which you have compoſed. Ceſario is juſt arrived, with all the pieces with which you entruſted him, and for which I return you a thouſand thanks. I am divided between friendſhip, curioſity, and joy. It is no ſmall ſatisfaction to converſe with one who comes from Cirey. How cold! How inadequate!—To my other ſelf! Who, in imagination, tranſports me thither! I aſk him a thouſand queſtions at once, and, as often interrupting him, prevent him from returning any anſwer. Some days will be neceſſary for us to

be

be able rationally to interrogate each other. But I waſte my time very unſeaſonably, when I preach to you of friendſhip, who are ſo well acquainted with, and have ſo excellently deſcribed, its effects.

I ſhall not at preſent ſay any thing of your works; I muſt read them coolly before I tell you my opinion. Not that I pretend to appreciate their value, for that would be injuring my own modeſty; I will relate my doubts, and you will put my ignorance to the bluſh.

Salutation to the ſublime Emily, and incenſe to the divine Voltaire!

LETTER L.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, March 31ſt, 1738.

I AM obliged to inform you that I have, for two ſucceſſive poſt days, received letters from M. Thiriot that have been opened. I would not even ſwear that the laſt you wrote to me had not been ſerved in the ſame manner. know not whether it were in France, or in the ſtates

ſtates of the king my father, that they fell victims to ſuch ill-placed curioſity. All that our correſpondence contains might be known. Your letters breathe nothing but virtue and humanity; and mine, in general, only requeſt that you would ſend me information on ſubjects * concerning which people in general trouble themſelves but little. Yet, notwithſtanding the innocence of our correſpondence, you well know what men are, and that they are but too much inclined to give an ill interpretation to that which ought to be exempt from blame.

I, therefore, intreat you would no longer addreſs thoſe letters which relate to philoſophy or poetry to M. Thiriot. Direct them rather to M. Tronchin du Breuil; for, though they will be longer on the road, I ſhall be indemnified by their ſecurity. When you write letters to me which only contain trifles, addreſs them as uſual to M. Thiriot, that the curious may have ſomething to give them employment.

Ceſario delights me with every thing he relates of Cirey. I am enchanted by your hiſtory of Louis XIV. I only could have wiſhed that you had not ranked Machiavel, who was

* The French reads—ne contiennent que des eclairciſſemens que je vous demande—i. e. *contain* information which I requeſt you to afford me. T.

a bad

a bad man, among the great men of his time. Whoever teaches us to break our promiſe, to oppreſs, and to commit injuſtice, were he a man the moſt diſtinguiſhed by his abilities in other reſpects, never ought to occupy a place which is due alone to virtue, and praiſe-worthy talents. Cartouche does not deſerve to be ranked with Boileau, Colbert, and Luxembourg. I am certain you are of my opinion; you are yourſelf too worthy a man to raiſe the fame of a contemptible villain to the rank of honour. I am, therefore, poſitive you have only conſidered Machiavel as a man of genius. Pardon my ſincerity; were you not highly deſerving of it, I would not be thus prodigal of truth.

If every hiſtory had been written like that which you have entruſted to me, we ſhould have been better informed of the manners of all ages, and leſs deceived by hiſtorians. The more I am acquainted with you the more am I convinced you are a man unequalled. I never read a finer ſtyle than that in which the hiſtory of Louis XIV. is written. I read each paragraph twice, or three times, ſo great is the pleaſure I receive; each line produces its effect, each contains excellent reflections; no falſe thought, nothing puerile; add to which, impartiality is perfectly preſerved. When I have

read the whole work, I will ſend you ſome trifling remarks; and, among others, ſome on German proper names, which are rather ill treated, and which may tend to make the work obſcure, ſince there are names ſo disfigured that the reader is obliged to gueſs at the perſon.

I could have wiſhed you had written all the works that have been compoſed, the ſubject of which might afford inſtruction; we might then have profited by reading. I ſometimes grow impatient when I meet with uſeleſs matter, puerile reflections, and that barrenneſs which is prevalent in certain books, and which the reader is obliged to re-write. But you ſpare your readers any ſuch labour. Whether they have or have not judgment, they will equally profit by your works; nothing is neceſſary for them but memory.

Application and a ſtruggle with the underſtanding are requiſite, before I can ſtudy your elements of Newton, which cannot be till Eaſter is over, making a ſhort abſence to take

Ce que vous ſavez,
Avec beaucoup de bienſéance *.

I ſhall repeat my doubts with the utmoſt franknes; aſhamed to reduce you to the ſitua-

* That which you wot of with all decency.

tion

tion of the Iſraelites, who could only rebuild the walls of Jeruſalem by defending themſelves with one hand while they laboured with the other.

You cannot but think my ſyſtem inſupportable; it is ſometimes ſo to myſelf. I ſeek an object on which to fix my mind, and hitherto I find none; if you know any ſuch, which is exempt from all contradiction, let me intreat you to point it out to me. If there be any thing, of which I am convinced, it is that there is an adorable Deity in heaven, and a Voltaire almoſt as eſtimable at Cirey.

I ſend a ſmall trifle for the marchioneſs du Chatelet, which I beg you will prevail on her to accept. I hope ſhe will condeſcend to preſerve it with care, and uſe it in her compoſitions.

I could not leave your portrait in the poſſeſſion of Ceſario; I envied my friend the double pleaſure of having converſed with you, and of being in poſſeſſion of your picture. This, ſaid I to myſelf, is too much; we muſt divide the favours of fortune. We both think of you the ſame, and are rivals, contending who ſhall eſteem and love you moſt. I almoſt had forgotten to mention your fugitive pieces.—Moderation in Happineſs—The Padlock—The Temple of Friendſhip, &c. I am charmed with

them all! How much do you increaſe my gratitude!

Do not let the marchioneſs forget to open the ink-ſtand. Be perſuaded there is nothing I more regret than my inability to convince you of the ſentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER LI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Rupin, April 19th, 1738 *.

WHEN you are ill I am every way a loſer; as well by the intereſt which I take, in whatever concerns you, as by the privation of an infinity of good thoughts, which I ſhould have received, had your health permitted. For the love of humanity, do not alarm me any more by ſuch frequent indiſpoſitions. Do not ſuppoſe either that theſe are metaphorical alarms, they are, to my misfortune, too real. I tremble when I apply to you the two fineſt lines which Rouſſeau perhaps ever wrote.

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

Et ne meſurons point au nombre des années
La courſe des héros *.

Ceſario gave me an exact account of the ſtate of your health; I have conſulted phyſicians on the ſubject, and they have aſſured me, by the faith of the faculty, that your life is in no danger; but that, with reſpect to your indiſpoſition, it could not be radically cured, becauſe the evil was too inveterate. According to their judgment, you have an obſtruction in the viſcera. They ſay that ſome of the veſſels are there relaxed; and that phlegm, flatulency, or a ſpecies of the nephritis, is the cauſe of your complaint. Such is the judgment they have been able to give, at a hundred leagues diſtance.

Although I place but little faith in the deciſions of theſe gentlemen, which are often more uncertain than thoſe of the metaphyſicians, I ſtill very earneſtly intreat you to have the *ſtatum morbi* drawn up, that we may try whether ſome able phyſician cannot afford you relief. How great would be my joy could I, in any manner, contribute to the re-eſtabliſhment of your health! I intreat, therefore, that you would ſend me a liſt of your infirmities and your ſufferings, in barbarous terms, and the jargon of the

* Judge not of heroes by their length of life.

faculty, but with all poſſible preciſion. You will thus very ſenſibly oblige me, and this is a ſmall ſacrifice which you are indebted to my friendſhip.

You inform me you have received ſome of my writings, and you add no critical remarks. Do not imagine that I have neglected the errors you have pointed out in my former pieces. I join the new corrections I have made in the ode on the love of God, with a ſhort poem addreſſed to Ceſario.

The mania of rhyming poſſeſſes me inceſſantly, and I fear it is one of thoſe ills which are incapable of cure. Since the Apollo of Cirey has kindly protected the atoms of Remuſberg, all its inhabitants cultivate the arts and ſciences. I alſo add a letter from a young man who lives with me to one of his friends. A few words from you would give him infinite encouragement. He has a genius which will be formed by cultivation, and which is inactive from the fear of doing amiſs.

I could rather wiſh you had need of my ode on patience to conſole you for the coldneſs of a miſtreſs than for the ſupport of your infirmities. It is eaſy to ſend conſolation, when we ourſelves feel no pain; but to triumph over the moſt acute feelings, and to write with perfect freedom

of mind, even while afflicted, is the effort of ſuperior genius.

Your epiſtle on Envy is inimitable; I almoſt prefer it even to its two twin ſiſters. You ſpeak of envy like a man who has felt the evil it may do, and with thoſe generous ſentiments which are your proper patrimony. I always diſcover you in great ſentiments: you feel them ſo truly that you expreſs them with facility.

How mention my writings, after having ſpoken of yours? What you have been pleaſed to ſay ſomewhat partakes of irony. My verſes are the fruits of the wild crab, yours of the flouriſhing tree of the orchard.

Behold the tow'ring eagle riſe
Returning to his native ſkies;
Behold the humble ſwallow ſkim
The ground, and o'er the ſurface ſwim;
Thou art the thunder-bearing bird,
With ſwallows am I doom'd to herd.

I am entirely of your opinion, reſpecting theatrical pieces; the charming paſſion of love ought only to be uſed like ſpice in ragouts; they ought not to be loaded with it, leſt this uniform taſte ſhould deprive the palate of its moſt exquiſite ſenſations. Merope deſerves in every reſpect to correct the corrupted taſte of the public, and to reſcue Melpomene from the contempt

tempt into which ſhe has been caſt by trifling ornaments. I entirely rely on the goodneſs of the corrections which you have made in the two laſt acts of that tragedy; little was wanting to render it perfect; and it certainly is a perfect work at preſent.

Corneille, Racine, and, after them, La Grange, have exhauſted all the common-place thoughts of the moſt tender gallantry. Crebillon, as we may ſay, has familiariſed the Furies with the ſtage; his tragedies all inſpire horror; all is dreadful, terrible. It was neceſſary the ſucceſſor of theſe poets ſhould quit the beaten track, and follow one more new and ſplendid. The paſſions which you have introduced are as capable of moving, intereſting, and pleaſing, as love is; it was only neceſſary to treat them properly, and to diſplay them after the manner in which you have done, in Merope and the Death of Cæſar.

T' enlighten France thee Heav'n deſign'd;
With conſcious ſtrength and ardent mind,
The dang'rous epic path we ſee
Thee tread, with grace and majeſty.
Thucydides thou riſeſt next.
Newton and Nature's page, perplex'd,
Having with daring ſoul diſplay'd,
Thou turn'ſt, to yield thy godlike aid

To ſick Melpomene, who lies
Deſpairing, and without thee dies!

But I quit the bright regions of poetry, that I may deſcend with you into the chaos of metaphyſics. I renounce the language of the gods, which I can but ſtammer, to ſpeak that of the Deity himſelf, with which I am unacquainted. We muſt at preſent raiſe a building the foundations of which will have little ſolidity; the work of a ſpider in the air, compoſed of moſt fine-drawn threads.

No perſon can be leſs prejudiced, in favour of his opinion, than I am, in favour of mine. I have diſcuſſed the ſubject of neceſſity with all poſſible application, and I have found difficulties attending it almoſt inſurmountable. I have read an infinite number of ſyſtems, not one of which is not hedged round by abſurdity, which threw me into fearful ſcepticiſm. Neither have I any particular reaſon which rather inclines me toward neceſſity than freedom. Be the truth as it may, things will continue in the ſame train. I ſupport ſuch queſtions to the beſt of my power, that I may perceive how far human reaſoning can extend, and on which ſide moſt abſurdity may be diſcovered.

But it is ſomething different with *the adequate cauſe*. Every man who wiſhes to be a philoſo-

pher,

pher, a mathematician, or a politician, in a word, every man who wiſhes to extend his ideas, muſt admit *an adequate cauſe.*

What is this adequate cauſe?—It is the cauſe of what happens; of which cauſe, of which principle, every philoſopher is in ſearch; therefore, every philoſopher admits *an adequate cauſe.* It is founded on our moſt evident ideas. Nothing cannot produce being, and, ſince Nothing cannot have exiſtence, it neceſſarily reſults that Beings or Effects muſt have a preceding Cauſe for their being, and this cauſe is called the adequate cauſe of their exiſtence. None but the vulgar, unacquainted with the exiſtence of an adequate cauſe, attribute effects, the cauſes of which they are unacquainted with, to chance. Chance, in this ſenſe, is a being which has ſprung from the chimerical brain of the poets; and which, like the ſoap bubbles that are blown up by children, has no body.

You are now about to drink the lees of my nectar, on this ſubject of abſolute neceſſity. I much fear leſt the ſame thing ſhould happen to you, with me and my hypotheſis, as did to me the other day. I had read, in I know not what book, ſomething concerning the cephalopharyngian muſcle. I looked into Furetière's dictionary, that I might find an explanation of the

word, and was told that the cephalopharyngian muſcle is the orifice of the œſophagus, named pharynx. Really, exclaimed I, I am now much the wiſer! Explanations are often more obſcure than the thing explained.—But, to return to my own explanation.

I confeſs, at preſent, that men have a ſenſation of freedom; they have that which they denominate the power of determining their will, and of influencing their motions. If you call the act of influencing motion, the act of aſſuming a reſolution, the act of performing ſome action, if, I ſay, you call theſe acts the freedom of man, I then agree with you that man is free. But if you call the reaſons which determine him in his reſolutions, and the cauſes of the motions he makes, freedom, I can prove that man is not free. My proofs are drawn from experience, and the obſervations I have made on the motives of my own actions and of the actions of others.

I maintain that all men are determined by reaſons (which, whether good or bad, does not affect my hypotheſis) and theſe reaſons are founded on a certain ſuppoſition of happineſs, or well being. Whence does it happen that, when a bookſeller brings me the Henriade and the filthy epigrams of Rouſſeau, from which to

chooſe,

choose, I prefer the Henriade? It is because the Henriade is a perfect work, by which my heart and understanding may excellently profit; whereas, the epigrams of Rousseau would but begrime my imagination. Therefore, the supposition of my own advantage, of my own good, induces me to determine in favour of one of these works, and to reject the other. By the same rule, the supposition of my happiness determines all my actions. This is the spring on which I depend for motion, and this spring is connected with another, which is temperament, or constitution. It is precisely with this wheel that the Creator winds up our machine. Man has the same freedom as a pendulum; he has certain vibrations, and can perform certain acts; but all are subservient to his temperament, and to his manner of thinking, more or less confined.

Ask any man, however stupid he may be, the reason of one of his actions, and he will produce some reason by which he was determined to act. Man is subservient to a law of nature, and consequently to the tone or temperament given him by the Creator. Let us therefore conclude that all men contain in themselves the momentum which determines or occasions their resolves. In behalf of absolute necessity,

neceſſity, I could wiſh that no ſubterfuge had ever been ſought from falſe argument againſt freedom; ſuch as that which you ſo well oppoſe, and ſo totally deſtroy. In effect, nothing can be more inconſiſtent *.

There is great temerity in wiſhing to reaſon on things which we do not underſtand, and there is ſtill infinitely more in wiſhing to preſcribe limits to divine omnipotence. I do but ſimply examine truths which are known to me, and from theſe I conclude that, ſince they are thus, it is the will of God they ſo ſhould be. My reaſoning does but connect the effects of nature with their primitive cauſe, which exiſts in God. According to this ſyſtem, God, having foreſeen the effects of temperament and character in man, preſerves his preſcience, and men poſſeſs a kind of freedom, though exceedingly limited, which ſuffers them to act according to their thoughts.

I have now to ſhew that my hypotheſis is not any way injurious or contradictory to the divine eſſence, and this I am able to prove.

The idea I have of God is that he is an omnipotent being, benevolent, infinite, and omni-

* The Baſil edition reads—Nothing can be more inconſiſtent than to ſay we ſhould be gods, if we were free. T.

ſcient.

ſcient. This God is determined in all things by the ſublimeſt reaſons; he does nothing which is not entirely reaſonable and conſiſtent. Nor does this in any manner overthrow the freedom of God; for God is reaſon itſelf, and, therefore, is certainly determined by reaſon; that is to ſay, he is determined by his will, which, in this ſenſe, is nothing more than a play upon words. God can foreſee his own acts, ſince they muſt be to all eternity ſubject to the excellence of his attributes, and muſt for ever bear the ſtamp of perfection. If, therefore, God is himſelf fate, how can he be the ſlave of fate? And, if this God, who, according to Clarke himſelf, cannot deceive himſelf, foreſees the actions of men, we muſt own that they happen from neceſſity. This Mr. Clarke even confeſſes, though unintentionally. My reaſon is obliged to acknowledge that God, being excellence itſelf, can do nothing which is not moſt excellent. This is what all the works of nature atteſt, a fact to which the whole maſs of men bear witneſs, and of the truth of which we ſhould perſuade ourſelves, if we were the only exiſting beings.

We muſt, however, beware of judging the world by ſections, which are but the members of one great whole, to which conſiſtency is neceſſary;

ceſſary; for this would be to loſe ſight of the whole; it would be to conſider a point in a work of miniature, and to neglect the effect produced by combination. We may take it for granted that all which we perceive in nature concurs to promote the views of the Creator. If our mole eyes be incapable of diſcovering theſe views, the defect is in our eyes, and not in the ſubject at which we look.

Such are the arguments my imagination has been able to furniſh me with, concerning the romance of neceſſity.

I notwithſtanding highly reſpect Cicero, the protector of freedom; though, to ſpeak the truth, I take moſt pleaſure in his Tuſculan diſputations. You ennoble the God of Clarke in ſuch a manner that I already begin to feel ſome reſpect for the Deity. Had you lived in the days of Moſes, you would have left a deſcription of the God of Abraham which would have rendered him worthy of worſhip.

I ſhall defer ſpeaking on your excellent eſſay on phyſics till ſome other opportunity; the work well deſerves a letter dedicated to the diſcuſſion of that ſubject only. I ſhall be equally regardful of my engagements reſpecting the age of Louis the Great, and I ſhall add to that letter ſome conſiderations on the preſent ſtate of

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the body politic in Europe. My intention was to have had theſe conſiderations printed in England, as an anonymous work, but have been prevented by particular reaſons.

I am in expectation of your epiſtle on friendſhip, as of a work which ſhall crown every other. I am as hungry after your writings as you are diligent in their compoſition.

I was really much ſurpriſed to perceive that the marchioneſs du Chatelet thought ſo highly of my letter; I with Leibnitz endeavour to find an adequate cauſe, and am tempted to believe that her admiration originates in ſome ſmall grain of indolence. She is not ſo liberal of her time as you are. I will immediately declare myſelf the rival of Newton; and, as is the mode at Paris, will write a libel againſt him; it will then depend on the marchioneſs to make peace between us. I willingly cede to Newton that preference which an old acquaintance and ſuperior merit have acquired him, and I only requeſt a few words, written in waſte moments, in return for which I ſhall hold the marchioneſs quit of all admiration whatever.

I very unſeaſonably gave the alarm concerning Thiriot. Be kind enough to continue our correſpondence by his intervention; for I ſhall then have your anſwers the ſooner.

You

You cannot imagine how much I delight in your thoughts, and love the goodneſs of your heart. I am very much diſpleaſed to ſee myſelf the Saturn of the planetary ſyſtem of which you are the ſun. But what can be done? My ſentiments bring me nearer to you, nor is the affection I have for you leſs fervent *. To this letter I add the particulars which you have aſked me to ſend concerning the life of the czarina and the czarowitz. If you wiſh for any thing further command my ſervices. I ever remain, &c.

LETTER LII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, April, 1738.

I HAVE received new favours from your royal highneſs, the precious fruits of your leiſure, and your ſingular genius. Your *ode* † to the queen, your royal mother, appears to me to

* What is added is from the Baſil edition. T.

† From what follows, in page 336, I ſuſpect an error of the preſs here, and that it ought to be *epiſtle*. T.

be

be your beſt work. When the heart and mind unite the neceſſary reſult is a maſterpiece. I find nothing to which to object, except ſome expreſſions which are not entirely conformable to our French nicety. We do not ſay *des encens* in the plural; nor do we ſay, as I believe is ſaid in German, *encenſer à quelqu'un* *. It is a phraſe only uſed among ſome of the refugee clergy, who have rather corrupted the purity of the French tongue. This is nearly all my grammatical pedantry could find to criticiſe in that charming work, which, as a man, as a poet, and as a ſervant tenderly attached to your auguſt perſon, I delight in.

How am I enchanted when I hear a prince, born to reign, ſay—

Ta clémence et ton équité,
Ces limites de ta puiſſance †.

Theſe are lines which I ſhould admire in the beſt poet, but which, coming from a prince, inſpire rapture. You, like Marcus Aurelius, ſatirize courts by your example and by your writings; and you have the ſuperior merit of reciting, in fine poetry and a foreign language, ſen-

* To offer up incenſe or praiſe.

† Thy clemency and thy juſtice, thoſe limits of thy power.

timents

timents which he wrote, rather dryly, in his mother tongue.

If the respectable affection by which this ode was dictated had not wrested my first suffrage from me, I should have bestowed it upon the ode, which has more imagination; and the difficulties that are to be surmounted, a merit which never ought to be overlooked in the arts, are much greater in a regular ode than a free epistle.

The Spring is written in a very different manner: it is a picture by Claude Lorraine. There is an English poet of merit, named Thomson, who has written *The Seasons* in a similar taste, in blank verse without rhyme. It should seem you have both been inspired by the same muse.

Will your royal highness permit me to make a remark on this poem, which is but little poetical?

Et dans le vaste cours de ses longs mouvemens,
La terre gravitant et roulant sur ses flancs,
Approchant du soleil, en sa carrière immense —*

These are philosophical lines, and consequently they ought to conform to philosophy and truth. It is no Joshua who, in condescension

* Literally—And in the vast course of its long motions, the earth, gravitating and rolling on its sides, approaching the sun in its immense career— T.

to vulgar error, ſpeaks in a truly vulgar ſtyle; but a prince and diſciple of Copernicus; a prince of the country in which Copernicus was born, for I believe he was a native of Thorn, and I imagine your royal houſe may have ſome claims on Thorn.—But to the point; and this point is, that the earth, from ſpring to ſummer, removes farther from the ſun; ſo that, at the middle of the ſign Cancer, it is about a million of long German miles further from the ſun than in the middle of winter; and, in conſequence of this inequality in its courſe, we have eight days more of ſummer than of winter.

I well know that it was long ſuppoſed we were neareſt to the ſun in ſummer; but this was a great error. Nor ought it to appear ſingular that one thirty-third degree of greater proximity ſhould not increaſe our heat, for I have little more heat at the diſtance of thirty two than of thirty-three feet from my fire ſide. The heat therefore is not occaſioned by the proximity of the ſun, but by the perpendicularity of its rays, and their being refracted by the air on the earth in a greater quantity; and the ſun's rays are neareſt to the perpendicular, and are moſt refracted, on our northern horizon, in ſummer, as your royal highneſs knows *.

I am

* The words of the original are ſo plain and poſitive that

I am thus verboſe to excuſe the only criticiſm I have to make, nor can I pay your royal highneſs too many thanks for the honours you do our French Parnaſſus.

I ſend the fourth epiſtle by this packet; the third is under correction. I ſhould have ſent the three new laſt acts of Merope, but they are now tranſcribing.

What your royal highneſs has deigned to ſend me concerning the czar Peter I. has effected a great change in my ideas. Is it poſſible that ſo many acts of horror could accompany plans which would have done honour to Alexander? What! At once to poliſh and to butcher his people! Himſelf their executioner, abominable in the act, and legiſlator! Deſcend from the throne to ſully himſelf in guilt! The creator of men, yet the diſhonour of human nature! Do you, great prince, who are the pride of mankind, as well in heart as in underſtanding, condeſcend to explain the enigma. I ſhall

that the author's meaning cannot have been miſtaken; though it is unfortunate for him that, while correcting the errors of the prince, he ſhould have himſelf fallen into ſo palpable an error. Refraction has little connexion with the ſeaſons, except in the extreme polar latitudes; and, in direct contradiction to what he aſſerts, the greater the degree of obliquity, of cold, and of denſity, the greater is the refraction. The people near the pole ſee the ſun for many days in the year, from this cauſe, when it is actually below the horizon. T.

wait

wait the memoirs which you ſhall have the goodneſs to communicate to me; nor will I employ them but according to your orders. I will not continue the hiſtory of Louis XIV. or rather of his age, till you ſhall ſo command. I will not— *(The remainder is wanting.)*

LETTER LIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Bruſſels, May, 1738.

RETURNING from thoſe gloomy abodes, in the neighbourhood of which your royal highneſs has never been, I do myſelf the honour to write to you for my own conſolation. I hope you will long continue to ſend me your orders to Bruſſels; I ſhall receive them much ſooner, and with more certainty than when they make ſo many bounds and rebounds as on the route to Paris, Bar-le-duc, and Cirey: at leaſt, I ſhall receive your commands immediately, with the hope that ſome day before I die *videbo dominum meum a facie ad faciem.*

I take the liberty to ſend your royal highneſs a ſhort narrative, not of my travels, but of thoſe of the Baron de Gangan *. It is a philoſophical trifle, which ſhould only be read, by way of relaxation from more ſerious labours, in company with the buffooneries of Harlequin. Can the enemy of Machiavel find time to travel with this Baron de Gangan? You will there find, however, a ſhort article, full of truth, reſpecting things of this earth.

I mean ſoon to ſend you another tribute of poetical baubles, for I hold myſelf accountable for the manner in which I ſpend my time to my true ſovereign. The goods of the ſubject, it is ſaid, appertain to other kings; my heart and my hours are the right of mine.

Madame du Chatelet, your other ſubject, and the beſt ornament of your court, preſents her reſpects, according to the permiſſion which has been granted her. She is here wholly abſorbed in law, for ſhe finds few perſons with whom ſhe can converſe on philoſophy. Neither the arts nor the pleaſures have taken up their abode at Bruſſels. A retired and peaceful life is here the lot of moſt individuals, but their tranquillity is ſo like, that it may eaſily be miſtaken for,

* This work has never been known, at leaſt not by that title.

languor. This quality, this languor, does not approach the houſe where Emily dwells, and which is honoured by the letters of our prince. We live in the moſt retired part of the town, in the ſtreet of the Great Tower. Here we daily converſe of the prince who is born to be beloved by the whole earth, as he is by us, by the Baron von Kayſerling, ſo worthy to pleaſe and to enjoy his preſence, and by the learned Jordan, whoſe happineſs I envy.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, and the tendereſt gratitude, &c.

LETTER LIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, May 20, 1738.

YOUR poſt-days reſemble the days of Titus; you would weep if your letters were not ſo many benefits. Your two laſt, of the 31ſt of March and 19th of April, with which I have been honoured by your royal highneſs, are new bonds of attachment; and it is neceſſary that

each of my anſwers ſhould contain a renewal of the oath of fidelity, which my ſoul, your ſubject, takes to your ſoul, her ſovereign.

The firſt thing on which I feel myſelf obliged to ſpeak is the manner in which you think on Machiavel. How could you forbear being actuated by that virtuous anger which you almoſt felt againſt me, becauſe I praiſed the ſtyle of this bad man? The two Borgias, father and ſon, and all ſuch petty princes, who had need of crimes to elevate themſelves, found it neceſſary to ſtudy his infernal politics, which, by a prince like you, cannot but be deteſted. Theſe politics, which we may rank with the art of Locuſta and Brinvilliers *, were able to acquire a temporary power for ſome tyrants, like as poiſon may procure an eſtate; but they never form either great or happy men. This is indiſputable; therefore, to what good purpoſes can ſuch a dreadful ſyſtem be applied? To effect its own deſtruction and the deſtruction of others. Theſe are truths which form the catechiſm of your fine underſtanding.

* A marchioneſs, executed at Paris in 1676, of intolerable depravity. She poiſoned her father and her two brothers; and, previous to this application of her poiſons, ſhe made trial of them on poor perſons, and on the ſick at the hoſpital called *l'Hotel Dieu.* T.

I am

I am ſo convinced of theſe ſentiments, which with you are innate, and the reſult of which muſt be the happineſs of mankind, that I had almoſt forgotten to return thanks to your royal highneſs, for the kind intereſt you have taken in my individual ſufferings. But ought not the love of the public good to precede all things? And, ſir, you condeſcend, among ſo many other benefits, to add that of conſulting phyſicians concerning my health! I know but one thing which, in ſingularity, equals this your goodneſs, and that thing is the phyſicians have told you truth. I have long been perſuaded that my diſeaſe, if I may be permitted to compare evil with good, is like my attachment to your perſon, an affair for life.

The conſolation which I enjoy in my delicious retirement, and in the honour of your letters, are ſufficiently powerful to make me ſupport much greater afflictions. I ſuffer moſt patiently; and, though my pains are ſometimes continued and acute, I am very far from thinking myſelf unhappy. Not that I am a ſtoic; on the contrary, I am very much of an epicurean, for I believe pain to be an evil, and pleaſure a good; but, after having drawn a juſt balance, I find infinitely more pleaſures than pains in this life.

From this ſhort chapter on morality, I ſhall purſue your flight, if your royal highneſs will grant me your permiſſion, into the abyſs of metaphyſics. A mind ſo juſt as yours, certainly, cannot regard the queſtion of freedom as a thing demonſtrated. The delight you have in order, and in perceiving ideas in a train, is ſtrongly pictured. God to you is the ſole and infinite maſter of all; and this opinion, ſingly conſidered, without recurring to ourſelves, ſeems to be a fundamental principle, whence inevitable neceſſity and all the operations of nature, are deduced. But another manner of reaſoning ſeems again to give God more power; and, if I may venture ſo to ſay, to make him a being more worthy of our adoration. This is to attribute to him the capability of creating free beings. The firſt method apparently makes him the God of machines, and the ſecond the God of thinking creatures. Each of theſe methods has its ſtrong and weak ſide; you weigh them in the balance of the ſage; and in deſpite of the great preponderance which Leibnitz and Wolf bring into the ſcale, you ſtill make the ſaying of Montagne your motto—*Que ſais-je?**

I perceive, more than ever, from the memoirs

* What know I?

on

on the Czarovitz, which your royal highneſs has deigned to ſend me, that hiſtory, as well as metaphyſics, has its ſcepticiſm. I have been careful, in the age of Louis XIV. not to penetrate farther than was neceſſary into the private cabinet of the prince. I have regarded the great events of his reign as beautiful phenomena, which I took care to notice without inquiring into their cauſe. Firſt cauſes are ſeldom known by the philoſopher, and the origin of cabal is as ſeldom known by the hiſtorian. To paint men and manners, to write the hiſtory of the human mind, in this glorious period, and eſpecially the hiſtory of the arts, have conſtituted my ſole object. I am very certain I ſhall ſpeak truth when I ſpeak of Deſcartes, of Corneille, of Pouſſin, of Girardon, and of the uſeful eſtabliſhments which have been formed. I am as certain I ſhall ſpeak falſehood if I attempt to relate the private converſations of Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon.

Should you deign to encourage me in my career, I ſhall proceed with ſtill additional ardour. However, in the mean time, I ſhall appropriate the remainder of this year to phyſics, and eſpecially to experimental philoſophy. I am informed, by all the vehicles of public intelligence, that my elements of Newton are on ſale; but

I have

I have never yet ſeen a copy. It is pleaſant to recollect that the author and the perſon to whom they are addreſſed are the only people who have not the work. The Dutch bookſellers have been in haſte, without conſulting me, or waiting for the corrections I was preparing. They have neither ſent me the book nor informed me of its publication. For this reaſon I cannot do myſelf the honour of remitting a copy to your royal highneſs, but I will be careful to ſend one from a new and more correct edition, now in the preſs.

It ſeems, ſir, that this little *commercium epiſtolicum* embraces the whole circle of the arts. I have taken the liberty of ſpeaking to you of ethics, metaphyſics, hiſtory, and philoſophy, and I ſhould be very ungrateful were I to forget poetry. How can I forget the laſt verſes which your royal highneſs has juſt ſent me? It is very aſtoniſhing that you ſhould be able to write with ſo much facility in a foreign language. To write French poetry is very difficult, in France; yet you write it, at Remuſberg, as if Chaulieu, Chapelle, and Greſſet, had enjoyed the honour of ſupping with your royal highneſs.

[*The reſt is wanting.*]

LET-

LETTER LV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, May, 1738.

THIS title is due to you as well becauſe of your uncommon merit as of the ſincerity with which you point out my faults. I am charmed with your criticiſm. I write as it were under your inſpection. Your information and remarks, like the pipes which convey water to the fountain, ſhall regulate the elaſticity of my mind; and the more ſevere your criticiſm ſhall be the more will you add to the obligations I am under.

Your fourth epiſtle is a chef-d'œuvre; I and Ceſario have read it again and again, and again and again have admired. I cannot expreſs the eſteem in which I hold your works; the noble freedom with which you ſpeak great truths enchants me.

Au bord de l'infini ton cours doit s'arrêter. *

This perhaps is the moſt philoſophic line which

* At the brink of infinitude thy courſe muſt ſtop.

has

has ever been written; the pride of moſt of the learned is incapable of bending before this truth. Every reſource of philoſophy (or argument) muſt have been exhauſted by you before it could have been diſcovered.

You have a peculiar talent for expreſſing great ſentiments and great truths; I am charmed with the two following lines——

O divine amitié, félicité parfaite,
Seul mouvement de l'ame où l'excès ſoit permis! *

I wiſh for the power to inculcate this truth in the hearts of all my countrymen, and of all mankind. Did all men think thus, we ſhould behold a more perfect and a more happy republic than that of Plato.

The preſent ſeaſon, which by me is devoted to Mars, has furniſhed me with ſo many occupations that I have not been able to anſwer you ſooner; I have received the fifth epiſtle on happineſs, and I reply to all theſe letters at once.

To ſpeak with my cuſtomary franknefs, I will freely confeſs that all which relates to the *man God* does not pleaſe me, in the mouth of a philoſopher, one who ought to be above popular

* Oh divine friendſhip, perfection of felicity! Thine are the only emotions of the ſoul in which exceſs is good!

errors.

errors.* Leave to the great Corneille, become a dotard, the insipid labour of turning *the imitation of Jesus Christ* into rhyme, and when you speak to us speak in your own person. We may talk of fables, but only as fables; and I think it will be best to be entirely dumb concerning christian fables, canonized by their antiquity, and by the credulity of absurd and stupid people.

I would only permit some fragment of the history of this pretended Saviour to be represented on the stage; but in your fifth epistle it appears that your too great condescension for the Jesuits, or the priesthood, has determined you to speak in the tone you there assume.

You will perceive, sir, I am sincere; I may be in an error, but I never can disguise my thoughts from you.

Cesario received the letter you have written to him with joy and transport; you will find his answer under the same cover that includes this. We are soon to be separated for a time, for I am to attend the king into the country of Cleves, where I expect to be next month. Have the goodness to address your letters, about this time,

* The verses alluded to are in the "Discourse on Virtue," and begin thus—*Quand l'ennemi divin des scribes et des prêtres,*

to

to colonel Borck, at Wesel. I hope I shall receive some during the abode I shall make there, especially because of my then greater proximity to France. I shall turn my face toward Cirey, in imitation of the Jewish captives at Babylon, who turned toward the temple to offer up their prayers, and to implore the divine aid.

Here are some pieces of my scribbling which I send to the crucible*. I greatly fear they will not bear the proof. You will perceive how incessantly I am haunted by the demon of rhyming. I may soon perhaps be possessed by the demon of war, and should fate, or this fiend, make me the enemy of the French, be well persuaded that hatred will never obtain any power over my mind, and that my heart will continually belie my arm. You alone, sir, make me love your nation; I should tenderly cherish the remembrance of the inhabitants of Cirey, although I should make war on France, and should say,

————Mon épée
Qui du sang espagnol eut été mieux trempée—†

I intreat you will write to me as often as possible. I am extremely uneasy concerning your

* *Le philosophe guerrier;* or the philosophic warrior; an epistle to M. Jordan, and another to Cesario.

† Much rather had my sword in Spanish blood be steeped.

health.

health. We have lately loſt one of the greateſt men in Germany; the famous M. de Beauſobre, a man of honour, probity, and genius; of an acute diſcerning mind, a great orator, well read in church hiſtory and literature, an implacable enemy of the Jeſuits, the beſt writer in Berlin, and one whoſe fire and vivacity not the great age of eighty could freeze. His defect was a ſmall inclination toward ſuperſtition, which is common enough among divines; nor was he inſenſible of the worth of his talents, or deaf to applauſe and praiſe. The loſs to me is the greater becauſe it is irreparable. We have no perſon as the ſubſtitute of M. de Beauſobre; men of his merit are rare; and, when nature plants ſuch fruit, it does not always come to maturity.

I have got poſſeſſion of a letter which was written to you by a lady of this country. You muſt have perceived, by her ſtyle, that ſhe and common ſenſe have quarreled. Do not eſtimate all the Pruſſian ladies by this ſpecimen; believe me there are ſome whoſe underſtandings and perſons you would not think deſerving of reproof. In gratitude I owe them ſome ſmall defence, for they impart inexpreſſible charms to the intercourſe of life. Gallantry out of the queſtion, they are indiſpenſably neceſſary in ſociety, for without them converſation is languid.

I am

I am in expectation of Merope, and of ſome other new-blown beauty, as I am of letters from my friend, and of an anſwer to ſome trifles which I ſent off to the little paradiſe of Cirey; and I languiſh during this ſtate of ſuſpenſe. I forgot to inform you that I have received your Newton; I ſpeak of the Dutch edition. I promiſed to communicate all my reflections to you, but how may I perform this promiſe? For a month paſt I have not had a moment to recollect myſelf in; and ſcarcely have I been able to write theſe few words.

A thouſand expreſſions of friendſhip to the marchioneſs, and to all thoſe whom the name of Voltaire has aſſembled at Cirey. Let me intreat you would not forget me, but that you will remain firmly convinced of the eſteem and friendſhip, &c.

LETTER LVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Louvain, May 30th, 1738.

AT leaving Bruſſels I received every thing which could gratify my mind and cure my body, for all of which I am indebted to your

your royal highneſs. *Deus nobis hæc munera fecit.* You are determined I ſhould live, ſir, and I will venture to ſay you are right ſo to determine, and not to ſuffer the moſt affectionate of your admirers, the faithful witneſs of what paſſes in your fine underſtanding, to periſh ſo ſoon. I and the Henriade are indebted to you for life. I am much more honoured than Virgil was; Auguſtus did not write verſes for Virgil till after the death of his poet: but your royal highneſs bids yours reſpire, and deigns to honour the Henriade with a preface written by your own hand. What need, ſir, have I of the wretched protection of a cardinal whom fortune has rendered powerful? What need have I of other aid than yours? Would to God I might be permitted to live a hermit in the county of Loo, whither I now follow Emily!

We arrived at Bruſſels the day before yeſterday. We are now on our journey, and it will be ſome days before I ſhall begin to enjoy a little leiſure. Whenever this ſhall happen, I ſhall arrange and ſend a few things which may afford a temporary amuſement to my protector, while he is occupied in writing his excellent work, ſo worthy of a prince like himſelf, and who, while he condeſcends to write againſt Machiavel, reſembles Apollo extirpat-

ing the ſerpent Python. You, certainly, ſir, are my Apollo, for to me you are both the god of phyſic and poetry; nay, you are Bacchus too, for your royal highneſs is pleaſed to ſend good wine to Emily and her patient. Will you be ſo obliging, ſir, as to order this bacchanalian preſent to be directed to a moſt worthy favourite of Bacchus, the duke d'Aremberg? Wine ought always to be addreſſed to him, as every literary work ſhould be to you. There are certain ceremonies to which wine is ſubjected at Bruſſels, and from which he will protect us. I hope, in his company, to drink to the health of my dear ſovereign, the real maſter of my ſoul, and whoſe ſubject I more effectually am than of the monarch in whoſe kingdom I was born.

We muſt be gone: I conclude a letter which the prattling of my overflowing heart would forbid me to end ſo ſoon. When I am at my journey's end, I will give the rein to my thanks, and the worthy Emily will have the honour of adding a few lines for herſelf. I will then make oath of obedience to the phyſician whoſe opinion your royal highneſs has had the goodneſs to ſend me. I will write to your amiable favourite, the baron von Kayſerling; in fine, I will fulfil every duty of affection. Behold me

at

at your feet, great prince! *O et præſidium et dulce decus meum!*

I am on the wing, but with the moſt unſhaken ſentiments of reſpect, admiration, and tender gratitude, &c.

LETTER LVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, June, 1738.

I HAVE received a part of the new favours with which I am loaded by your royal highneſs. M. Thiriot has remitted me the packet in which I find *Le Philoſophe Guerrier*, and the epiſtles of M. von Kayſerling and Jordan. You march with giant ſtrides, while I feebly creep. I have only a poor epiſtle to ſend, *oportet illum creſcere, me autem minui.*

With how much ardour you purſue
That fame which ſtill you keep in view!
When you ſhall march to dang'rous war,
Proud conqueſt ſhall attend your car;
Then ſhall your muſe, in lofty verſe,
The victories you have won rehearſe,
While men and gods admiring view
Hector and Homer join'd, in you!

Your martial ſpirit France ſhall deem
A high, an honourable theme.
The double meed Fate you decrees
At once to conquer us and pleaſe.

One of the firſt military exploits which I ſhall ſupplicate from your royal highneſs will be to come and retake Cirey, which has been very unjuſtly detached from Remuſberg, to which it appertains by right.—Never give up Cirey: when you ſhall make peace, reſtore Straſbourg and Metz if you pleaſe, but I conjure you, ſir, preſerve your Cirey; and take particular care that no cannon ball be ſuffered to damage the ſtuccoed walls, the gilded wainſcots, and the charming cloſets and cabinets of Emily. I ſuſpect there is a ſtandiſh upon the road for her. That with which you have honoured M. Jordan will ſoon be productive of excellent works; were it to any other perſon, I ſhould have ſaid of this ſtandiſh coming from you, what a certain Turk ſaid to Scanderbeg: "You have ſent "me your ſabre, but you have not ſent me "your arm."

Your epiſtle to Jordan is true pleaſantry; that to Ceſario is worthy of your heart and underſtanding. The Philoſophic Warrior perfectly correſponds to its title; it is full of imagination and of reaſon. Let me intreat you, ſir, to remark that the faults which you commit againſt

our

our language and verſification are but trifling. For example, after thus beautifully beginning,

> Loin de ce ſejour ſolitaire,
> Ou, ſous les auſpices charmans
> De l'amitié, tendre et ſincère, &c *.

You add—

> *La ſcience non d'orgueil enflée* †.

You could not divine that *ſcience* is here a word of three ſyllables, and that the *non* after *ſcience* ſounds ſomewhat harſhly. Such would be the remark of a grammarian of the French academy; but you poſſeſs that to which our preſent academicians are ſtrangers; you poſſeſs genius.

Pardon my freedom, but are you yourſelf aware of the beauty of the following lines?

> Et le trépas, qui nous pourſuit,
> Sous nos pas creuſe notre tombe.
> L'homme eſt une ombre, qui s'enfuit;
> Une fleur, qui ſe fane et tombe.
> Mille chemins nous ſont ouverts,
> Pour quitter ce triſte univers;
> Mais la nature, ſi feconde,
> N'en fit qu'un pour entrer au monde ‡.

Nature

* Far from this ſolitary abode, where, under the delightful auſpices of ſincere and tender friendſhip, &c.

† Not the ſcience of inflated pride.

‡ From death's purſuit no art can ſave;
Beneath our feet he digs our grave,

Nature has made but one Frederic. Oh, that his life might be as lasting as his name!

I make oath to your royal highness that, as soon as you shall have recovered possession of the castle of Cirey, there shall be no more of that dull sermonizing concerning which you so heroically reproach me. But Socrates occasionally sacrificed with the Greeks. True it is this did not save his life, but it might save the petty *Socratines* of the present day: *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.* There was once a fine young lion, who proudly passed an ass which had been laden and beaten by his master. Art thou not ashamed, said the lion to the ass, to suffer any one to place two panniers upon thy back? My lord, replied the ass, when I shall be an honourable lion, I will take care that my master shall carry the panniers.

Ass as I am, I herewith send an epistle the sentiments of which are tolerably firm. I should be glad to know what a person like Wolf would think of it, if *sapientissimus Wolfius* be capable of reading French poetry; I should be glad to

> Man is a fleeting shade, a flow'r,
> That blooms and withers in an hour.
> High roads by thousands open lie,
> To quit life's gloomy stage, and die;
> Though fruitful nature yields but one,
> By which the actor can come on.

hear

hear the opinion of a Jordan, who, I imagine, will be the worthy ſucceſſor of M. de Beauſobre; eſpecially of one Ceſario; and thrice eſpecially of your royal highneſs; of you, ſir, who, a great prince and a great man, unite in yourſelf all the talents of the foregoing.

Your royal highneſs has, no doubt, read the excellent work of M. de Maupertuis. A man like him, when opportunity ſhall ſerve, might found an academy of ſciences, at Berlin, which ſhould riſe ſuperior to that of Paris.

I have received a letter from the baron von Kayſerling, the Hæpheſtion of Remuſberg. You, great prince, poſſeſs what thoſe who are what you hereafter ſhall be want; you poſſeſs true friends.

I am aſtoniſhed to ſee, by the letter of your royal highneſs, which is undated, that you have not received the four acts of Merope, accompanied by a tolerably long letter; for it is ſix weeks ſince M. Thiriot acknowledged the receipt of the packet, and ſince he ought to have put it in the poſt. There have been ſome trifling interruptions in the intercourſe, which, to my honour, has ſubſiſted between us. I mean ſoon to ſend your royal highneſs a copy of a more correct edition of the elements of Newton. You, ſir, are the only perſon on earth

who is capable of combining all this with the multitude of your occupations and your duties.

Madame du Chatelet never ceases thinking on you with admiration—and with regret. You have bestowed a high title on me which I never can merit, though my heart makes every effort for that purpose. A man, who had been loved by the famous sir Philip Sidney, ordered that, after his death, instead of his name, they should write upon his tomb—HERE LIES THE FRIEND OF SIDNEY. My tomb never can have such an honour; there are no means of saying *the friend of* ———

I am with the most profound veneration, and that devoted affection in which you deign to indulge me, &c.

LETTER LVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Amatte, June 17, 1738 *.

TO receive doubts, which I have sent concerning your own works, as you have done,

* No place named, and dated June 18th, in the Berlin edition.

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is a mark of very ſuperior genius. Machiavel is henceforth eraſed from the liſt of great men, and your pen regrets it has ſullied itſelf with his name. The abbé Dubos, in his parallel between poetry and painting, cites the Italian politician among the great men whom Italy has produced, ſince the revival of the arts and ſciences; but he certainly deceives himſelf, and I could wiſh the political empiric might be blotted from the number of thoſe of whom your name ought to ſtand the firſt.

I earneſtly requeſt you will continue the hiſtory of the age of Louis the Great. Europe has never ſeen ſuch a hiſtory, and I dare venture to aſſure you the world has no idea of a work ſo perfect as that which you have begun. I have even reaſons which appear to me more preſſing ſtill, and which induce me to beg you will finiſh the work. Your experimental philoſophy makes me tremble; I am afraid of quickſilver, I dread the laboratory, and all thoſe effects which are the conſequence of experiments, and which are ſo prejudicial to health. Nor ſhall I perſuade myſelf you have the leaſt friendſhip for me, if you will not be careful of yourſelf.

Madame du Chatelet, indeed, ought to be very watchful. Were I in her place, I would

impoſe

impoſe taſks ſo agreeable upon you that I would teach you to forget your experiments. You ſupport pain like a philoſopher; and, indeed, were we not to omit the good when we are enumerating the evil we ſuffer in this world, we ſhould continually find that we are not ſo exceedingly unhappy. A great part of our ills conſiſts in the fertility of our own fancy, and a ſmall tincture of ſpleen.

I have ſo totally exhauſted myſelf, in my metaphyſics, that I find it impoſſible to add any thing more. Each man endeavours to divine the hidden ſprings of nature; and may not philoſophers all happen to be deceived? There are as many different ſyſtems as there are philoſophers. Each of theſe ſyſtems has a degree of probability; yet each is contradictory to the other. The Malabar Indians have calculated the revolutions of the celeſtial bodies, on the ſuppoſition that the ſun turns round a great mountain in their country; and their calculations are juſt. Let men remember this, and afterward vaunt of the prodigious efforts of human reaſon, and the vaſt depth of human knowledge.

Man is really acquainted with only few things; but, ſuch is the pride of his mind, he wiſhes to be acquainted with all. Formerly metaphyſics appeared

appeared to me a country in which great discoveries might be made; it now only presents an ocean to my view, famous for its shipwrecks.

Jeune j'aimois Ovide, à present c'est Horace *.

BOILEAU.

Metaphysics, like a quack, promises largely; but experience teaches us the quack never performs his promise. After having observed much, whether in studying the sciences or the minds of men, we naturally incline to scepticism; and *the wish to be deeply informed often teaches us to doubt*. From all I can learn, the Newtonian philosophy came to hand with me sooner than with its author. I thought the title appeared singular enough; and, as I conjecture, the book was indebted for it to the liberality of the bookseller. An able algebraist of Berlin has spoken to me of some trifling errors of calculation, but in other respects the men of science have been delighted. For my own part, judging, as I do, without any great knowledge of such subjects, I shall some day request explanations from you concerning the vacuum, which appears to me very marvellous and incomprehensible; also on the flux and reflux

* Ovid my favourite once, 'tis Horace now.

of the ſea, occaſioned by attraction; on the reaſon of colours, &c. I ſhall queſtion you as a ploughman would, were you to undertake to give him inſtruction, on ſuch ſubjects, and you will be obliged to take ſome trouble to convince me.

I do not deny having perceived ſome ſtriking truths in Newton; but are there not principles, which are too much extended? In a word, do we not find fillagree work intermingled with the Tuſcan columns. As ſoon as I ſhall return from my journey, I will acquaint you with all my doubts: recollect that,

And onward were they led to truth by doubt.

I have juſt read the three laſt acts of Merope, and can affirm that hatred and envy combined could not at preſent find fault with that admirable work. I do not ſpeak thus becauſe you have paid attention to my criticiſm, nor am I blinded by friendſhip. It is truth; it is becauſe Merope is without blemiſh. All the rules of probability are obſerved, and all the incidents are well prepared. The character of a tender mother, betrayed by that very tenderneſs, is worth all the originals of Vandyke. Poliphontes at preſent preſerves a perfect unity of character; all he ſays corre-

ſponds

ſponds to that character, which is that of a ſuſpicious tyrant. In the councils of Narbas is all the uſual timidity of old age, and his remaining upon the ſtage is natural. Ægiſthus ſpeaks as Voltaire would ſpeak, were he ſo ſituated; his heart is too noble to be guilty of meanneſs; he poſſeſſes courage to revenge the manes of his father; and he is equally modeſt after ſucceſs and grateful toward his benefactors.

May a German, an Ultramontane, be permitted to make a trifling grammatical remark on the two laſt lines in the piece?—*O tempora, O mores!* A Bœotian ſtands forth to accuſe Demoſthenes of a ſolecifm.—The following are the lines in queſtion.

Allons, monter au trône, en y plaçant ma mere:
Et vous, mon cher Narbas, ſoyez toujours mon pere *.

Do you mean by the words—*Et vous, mon cher Narbas*—to place Narbas on the throne along with Ægiſthus and his mother? Or do you mean that Narbas is continually to act as his father? Could not you read thus:

Allons, monter au trône, et plaçons y ma mere;
Pour vous, mon cher Narbas, ſoyez toujours mon pere.

* Let us aſcend the throne, and place my mother there; and do you, dear Narbas, ever be to me as a father.

Am not I exceedingly impertinent, and do not I deſerve to be diſgracefully expelled the French Parnaſſus? Nothing but the intereſt I take in the fame of my friend could make me guilty of ſuch incongruities. Correct me, I beſeech you, and ſhew me my error. You will ſay that the words *placons y* are not ſufficiently harmonious—I own it; but they are more intelligible.

Here is my political eſſay, ſuch as I intend to have it printed. I hope you will not ſuffer it to eſcape out of your poſſeſſion, for you will eaſily comprehend the conſequences. I beg you will tell me your general opinion of it, without entering into any minute examination. A memorial is wanting, which I ſhall ſoon have, and which you can at any time add.

The memoirs of the academy, which I have ſent for, will be my ſummer's and autumnal taſk. I follow you at a diſtance in my labours, like as the tortoiſe creeps along the track of the ſtag.

The young man who is the author of the allegory, delighted by your approbation, feels an increaſe of poetical ardor. He has already produced a new ſpecimen, as you may perceive. The name of Voltaire alone induces us to write, ſuch writers as we are; it is not our divine ardor

dor which brings down Apollo from Olympus; it is you who inſpire us.

The Merope of Maffei is on the road, and ſhould ſoon arrive. The packet of which you have had notice, and which the ſubſtitute of Tronchin has not ſent you, contains a trifle for the marchioneſs; a piece of furniture for her *boudoir* *. I beg you will aſſure her that all thoſe who are capable of loving you inſpire me with eſteem. Ceſario ſeems to me a little ſmitten by the marchioneſs. Speaking of her, he ſaid to me—*When ſhe converſed, I was enamoured of her underſtanding; and of her perſon, when ſhe was ſilent.*—Happy the eyes that have ſeen, and the ears that have heard her! Still happier thoſe who know Voltaire, and who daily enjoy his ſociety.

You cannot imagine the impatience I feel to ſee you; I am horribly weary of only being acquainted with you by the eye of faith; I wiſh the eye of the fleſh ſhould alſo be gratified. If you ever ſhould be carried off, take it for granted I ſhall act the part of Paris.

Perſuade yourſelf of the ſentiments with which I am your moſt faithful friend.

* A ſmall chamber.

LET-

LETTER LIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, June, 1738.

WHEN I received the new benefit your royal highneſs has conferred on me, I immediately thought of preparing new tribute; for, when a monarch enriches his ſubjects, their taxes ought conſequently to be increaſed. But it will be impoſſible, ſir, for me to acquit myſelf of all my debts. The laſt product of your labour is the work of a true ſage, who is much ſuperior to philoſophers. Your mind is the better enabled to doubt by its capability of reſearch.

Nothing, ſir, is more certain than that we are under the direction of a power as inviſible as it is ſtrange in this world. So chickens are for a certain time put into pens, that they may afterward be brought to the ſpit; but they never can comprehend what was the whim of the poulterer for having cooped them up thus. I will wager that, if theſe chickens were to reaſon, and form a ſyſtem from their cage, not one of them would divine that they were thus treated in order to be eaten.

Your

Your royal highneſs may well laugh at the biped animals who imagine they are acquainted with all things. A fool's cap ſhould be placed upon that learned head which ſuppoſes it can explain what are duration, coherence, firſt cauſe, and electricity; what produces ſeed, feeling, hunger, and digeſtion; in fine, which believes it underſtands matter, and, what is ſtill more ridiculous, mind. A certain degree of knowledge is granted to man; we can meaſure, calculate, and weigh to a certain point. Mathematical truths are indubitable, which is much. We know beyond doubt that the moon is leſs than the earth; that the planets perform their courſes according to a given proportion; that there cannot be leſs than thirty millions of leagues, each of three thouſand paces, between the earth and the ſun; we can predict eclipſes, &c. To pretend to more is temerity; it is not intended that the bottom cards in the pack ſhould be ſeen.

I imagine ſyſtematic philoſophers reſemble curious travellers, who, having taken the dimenſions of the ſeraglio of the Grand Turk, and who perhaps might have ſeen ſome of the apartments, preſume thence to divine how often his highneſs has embraced his favourite ſultana, or his ganymede, the preceding night.

Yet your royal highneſs, for a German prince in duty bound to protect the ſyſtem of Copernicus, appears to me very ſceptical This is like ceding one of your provinces for the love of peace, and which I would beg leave to remind you is only conſented to as a laſt reſort. I, an inſignificant Frenchman, place the planetary ſyſtem of Copernicus in the rank of mathematical truths; nor do I think it can ever be deſtroyed by the mountain of Malabar.

I pay every honour due to theſe good gentlemen of Malabar, but I believe them to be very poor philoſophers. The Chineſe, compared to whom the Indians of Malabar ſcarcely are men, are very bad aſtronomers; the moſt inſignificant jeſuit, among them, is a towering eagle. The mathematical tribunal of China, in defiance of its formal bows and pointed beards, is a wretched college of ignorant perſons, who predict rain and fair weather, but who are unable exactly to calculate an eclipſe. I will grant that the barbarians of Malabar have a mountain in the form of a ſugar-loaf, which ſerves them as a gnomon; their mountain is undoubtedly of uſe to teach them the equinoxes, the ſolſtices, the riſing and the ſetting of the ſun and the ſtars, the diviſion of time into hours, the aſpects of the planets, and the phaſes of the moon.

moon. A ball at the end of a ſtick would perform the ſame office for us in the open fields; nor would the ſyſtem of Copernicus be thereby injured.

I take the liberty to ſend your royal highneſs my *ſyſtem of pleaſure*. I am no ſceptic on this ſubject; for, ſince I have been at Cirey, and have been honoured by the bounties of your royal highneſs, I believe pleaſure to be demonſtrated.

I am aſtoniſhed that, among ſo many perplexed demonſtrations of the exiſtence of God, no one ever thought of bringing pleaſure as a proof; for, phyſically ſpeaking, pleaſure is divine; and I hold that every man who drinks excellent Tokay, embraces a charming woman, and who, in a word, feels agreeable ſenſations, muſt acknowledge a ſupreme and beneficent being. It was for this reaſon that the ancients made deities of all the paſſions; and, as all the paſſions are given us for our welfare, according to my doctrine, they prove the unity of a God, for they prove a unity of deſign. Will your royal highneſs permit me to conſecrate this epiſtle to him whom God formed to render mankind happy, and to him whoſe goodneſs is my happineſs and my glory? Madame du Chatelet participates in theſe ſentiments. I am,

with moſt profound reſpect, and unbounded devotion, &c.

LETTER LX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR, Weſel, July 24th, 1738 *.

I AM now more than ſixty leagues nearer Cirey, and I ſeem as if I had but another ſtep to take, and to be there; yet I know not what inviſible power prevents my arrival. You cannot conceive how much I ſuffer; or the inquietude I feel, knowing myſelf ſo near, to ſee myſelf incapable of enjoying your converſation.

I have paſſed through a country, where, certainly, nature has neglected nothing to render the lands fertile, and the fields as pleaſant as poſſible; but it ſhould ſeem as if ſhe had exhauſted herſelf in the formation of plants, hedges, and rivulets, which embelliſh each landſcape, and that ſhe wanted ſufficient force for the improvement of our ſpecies. I have ſeen the greateſt part of Weſtphalia, which lay in our way, and muſt own, if God thought proper to

* July 21ſt in the Berlin edition.

breathe

breathe his divine ſpirit into man, the portion allotted to theſe people was certainly very ſmall; nay ſo ſmall that it may well be made a queſtion whether the beings we there ſee, in the form of man, do think or do not. I ſuſpend my judgment for the love of humanity, and from the fear that you ſhould impute whatever I ſhould ſay on this ſubject to detraction.

I enquire after you, of all perſons who come from Holland, and they all tell me of the infamous libels with which you are perſecuted by your countrymen; and of the ingratitude of your nation, which ſuffers a man who is an honour to this nation, and who hereafter ſhall render the age in which he lived illuſtrious, to be loaded with opprobrium.

I ſupported your cauſe at Brunſwick, againſt one Botmer *, a lively, thoughtleſs, would-be-wit, who when he wants arguments reſorts to affirmation, and obliged him to confeſs, in the preſence of twenty people, that the judgment which he had pronounced on you was groſsly erroneous, and that he was incapable of underſtanding all the beauties of your works.

You perceive, ſir, I every where make proſelytes; and that I wiſh to gain you ſome even at Paris, in deſpite of France, and to make

* The Baſil edition reads *Bomar*.

your nation feel, judging as it does from levity or caprice, that its eyes have been hood-winked, and that jealouſy and envy are a kind of fog, which darken and conceal from the envious the merit of their adverſaries.

I expect to meet du Breuil Tronchin here, to take meaſures with him concerning our correſpondence. I believe, however, I have found a ſhorter road through Aix, where I have a wine merchant named Logni, whoſe correſpondents are chiefly in Champagne; and, provided you ſhall think proper to truſt a certain perſon of the name of Geoffroi, who lives at Epernay, I believe our intercourſe may be very much accelerated by this new channel.

I am in perpetual motion here, and am kept active, very active. Perhaps I am fated to ſin in extremes: in a few weeks, contemplation will have its turn.

Thiriot has ſent me your letter to Maffei, and your other letter on the work of M. Dutot, which are, each in its kind, maſterpieces. You ſpeak of poetry like Horace, and of the art of rendering men happy like * * * *, or like Agrippa.

If ſuch a thing may be, bring your meridian nearer ours; it ſhould ſeem that fate, envious

of

of my happineſs, ordained that Cirey ſhould be ſo far from Remuſberg.

By ſyſtem yet unknown, with plaſtic touch,
Let ſome philoſopher new mould old earth;
Sink hill and valley, river, lake, and ſea;
All obſtacles remove that our abodes divide.

I ſhould be very glad M. de Maupertuis could do me this kindneſs. I would more willingly own myſelf in his debt for this than for his voyage to Greenland, or all he learned from the Laplanders. I am with much eſteem, &c.

LETTER LXI.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Loo, in Holland,
Aug. 6, 1738.

I PERCEIVE the true picture of your mind, and of my own, in the beautiful epiſtle on man, which I have juſt received, and for which I return you a thouſand thanks. Thus a great man ought to think, and theſe thoughts are as worthy of you as the conqueſt of the world was of Alexander. You modeſtly ſeek truth, and boldly publiſh it when found. I am

convinced there can be but one God and one Voltaire in nature: it is impoſſible this nature, ſo fertile in other reſpects, can copy her work, or produce your equal.

There are none but great truths in your epiſtle on man; you never are more ſublime than when you determine to be yourſelf. Acknowledge with me, my dear friend, that each man ought to be himſelf; and you have ſo many reaſons to be ſatisfied, with your manner of thinking, that you never ſhould condeſcend to borrow the thoughts of others.

Let monks in their obſcure cloiſters bury their miſerable theology in their own mean dirt, and may our deſcendants remain for ever ignorant of the puerile follies of faith, and of the ceremonious worſhip of prieſts and friars! The blooming flowers of poetry are proſtituted when they are made to bedeck and ornament error; and the pencil which is able to paint men ought to efface the figures of jeſuits.

I am infinitely obliged to you for the pains you have taken to correct my faults: I pay ſtrict attention to all thoſe which you point out, and hope to render myſelf more and more worthy of my friend, and my maſter, in the art of thinking and writing.

Draw no compariſon, I beſeech you, between

you;

your works and mine. You march with a firm ſtep along difficult roads; whereas I creep in beaten paths. As ſoon as I return home, which perhaps will be at the end of this month, Ceſario and Jordan will fly to your epiſtle on man, and I guarantee their plaudits. As to the *ſapientiſſimus Wolfius*, I am wholly unacquainted with him, having neither written nor ſpoken to him, and I believe, like you, that he has but little knowledge of the French language.

Your imagination, my dear friend, renders you a conqueror at a cheap rate; therefore, be perſuaded we are under every obligation to your generoſity. If ever, in my life, I ſhould go to Cirey, it certainly would not be to form a ſiege. Your eloquence, more powerful than the deſtructive implements of Jericho, would cauſe the weapons of war to drop from my hands. I have no other claims over Cirey than thoſe which I may aſſert over gratitude, for the diſintereſtedneſs of my friendſhip. Like another Jaſon, I ſhall carry off the fleece; but I ſhall carry off at the ſame time the dragon which guards the fleece. Let the marchioneſs beware!

At leaſt, madam, you will not fall into the hands of pirates: a generous conqueror, I will divide with you, with your good permiſſion, that

that Voltaire whom you wiſh ſolely to poſſeſs.

I revert to you, my dear friend: Returning from my conqueſts, it is but juſt that I ſhould enjoy winter quarters, which will be prepared for me by M. de Maupertuis. Your ideas relative to him are excellent. I could have wiſhed that you had added to what you wrote to me—*And we will partake this care between us.* M. Thiriot tells me of a new edition of your Newtonian philoſophy, for which, till I have received it, I will reſerve my thanks. I know not how my letters are employed, but they ought to be cruelly weary on the road. They muſt certainly meet with ſome delay, for it is two months ſince the ink-ſtand for Emily was ſent. The large packet was to paſs through Luneville, and I am in hopes that you have received it before this.

I write from a place which formerly was the reſidence of a great man, and which is at preſent the abode of the prince of Orange. The demon of ambition ſheds his deſtructive venom over his days; this prince, who might be the moſt fortunate of men, is preyed upon by chagrin, in his noble palace, and in the midſt of his gardens and ſplendid courtiers. This is really a pity; for, in other reſpects, the prince

has

has infinite wit, and various high qualities. I converſed much, on Newton, with the princeſs; and from Newton we proceeded to Leibnitz, and to the late queen of England, who, according to what the prince has told me, was of the opinion of Clarke.

I heard at this court that s'Graveſande had not ſpoken of your tranſlation of Newton in ſuch a manner as I could have wiſhed. Good God!—Shall ſenſibility of heart never be united with grandeur, riches, wit, and knowledge?

I have received no letters during my whole journey, notwithſtanding the precautions I took; and I know not what is become of our ruinous Parnaſſus of Berlin. Jordan will be two inches higher when he ſhall hear of the place of which you think him worthy. Your letter is a ſugar plumb, which I ſhall give him on my return. Could my pen write all my heart thinks my letter would never end.

Le ſecret d'ennuyer eſt celui de tout dire *.

I ſhall ſay but little, my dear friend, and that little is—think ſometimes of me, when you have nothing better to think of; for I would not be the loſs of one excellent thought.

* The art to be dull is to ſay all we think.

My compliments to the marchioneſs; I am ſo diſturbed here that I am not myſelf. Love me a little, for I am very affectionate, and do not doubt of the ſentiments of eſteem with which I am, &c.

LETTER LXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, Auguſt 5, 1738.

I HAVE received the moſt beautiful and permanent of the favours of your royal highneſs. Your political work is at length arrived. Indeed I ſuſpected that he who was ſo ſucceſsful in our arts would be very ſuperior in his own. I was aſtoniſhed to perceive in you ſo ſage and ſo ſublime a metaphyſician, and ſo amiable a poet; but I am not ſo to ſee you write like a great prince, and a true politician. It is but juſt that your royal highneſs ſhould underſtand your trade. Woe to them who are better acquainted with other profeſſions than their own. I am about to ſpeak vainly; I believe that, had theſe *Conſiderations on the preſent ſtate of the body politic in Europe* been printed under the name of a member

a member of the Britiſh parliament, I ſhould have diſcovered your royal highneſs; and ſhould have ſaid I here ſee the great prince concealed under the great citizen.

In this work, which is worthy of its author, there is a predominant ſtyle which diſcovers you; and I there perceive I know not what air of a member of the Empire which an Engliſh citizen ſeldom attains: a member of the houſe of Lords or Commons is leſs intereſted in Germanic freedom. There is likewiſe a ſmall trait of the good Leibnitz philoſophy which bears your ſignet. *Nothing*, ſay you, *is without its adequate cauſe*; and I imagine, from this ſingle phraſe, I ſhould have exclaimed, here is my philoſophic prince; I have him; it can be no other! But I ſhould moſt certainly have known you by the grandeur and humanity of your mind; for ſuch is the predominant colouring in all your pictures.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet and I have repeatedly read the excellent and inſtructive work with which your royal highneſs has deigned to honour Cirey, and which other eyes have not the happineſs to read. Madame du Chatelet affirms without heſitation that this, of all the things you have written, is moſt worthy of yourſelf. I am bold enough to think ſo too; but

your moſt recent favour is always the moſt cheriſhed, and I fear leſt I ſhould deceive myſelf in my ſelection.

May I be permitted, paltry atom as I am, crawling in a corner of that world which your equals kings and emperors govern, may I be permitted to intreat information from your royal highneſs? I am one of thoſe people who interrogate Providence. Your providence has rendered me too adventurous.

Is it in jeſt or earneſt that your royal highneſs ſaid the project of marſhal de Villars, of uniting the emperor with France, has been followed? It ſeems to me that there is an air of truth diſcoverable, amidſt the fine irony with which the paſſage is ſeaſoned.

In effect, who ſhould reſiſt, were the emperor united with France and Spain? The Engliſh and Dutch might then employ their ſcales, with which they have endeavoured to weigh Europe, to weigh their bales from the eaſt and weſt Indies. The following is an expreſſion of the reſpectable author of that work by which I was ſtruck—*That fortune which preſides over the happineſs of France*—and which more than ever perſuades me that France, very fortunately, played a game in which ſhe was ignorant that ſhe was

any

any way intereſted, the very moment before ſhe took up the cards.

I have heard the late marſhal de Villars ſay that it was found neceſſary to oblige France to take arms; that the French had twice even broken their word with the Spaniſh miniſtry, and that at length they had been hurried away by circumſtances; piqued by the contempt which the whole council of the empire, except the great prince Eugene, openly teſtified for the French miniſtry; and in part encouraged by the hope of ſeeing king Staniſlaus, who loves you with his whole heart, on the throne of Poland, where he would be ſeated had the wiſhes of the Poliſh nation and the laws prevailed.

Your royal highneſs knows that France, at firſt, intended to ſend king Staniſlaus a more efficacious ſuccour than that of fifteen hundred foot againſt fifty thouſand Ruſſians; but the threats of the Engliſh, and their fleet, ready to block up the paſſage, kept the famous Du Guè Trouin in port, who hoped to have meaſured ſwords with the monarchs of the ocean. They therefore ſent king Staniſlaus the aid of a pawn againſt a queen and a caſtle; and the king, whom they neither durſt aid nor forſake, was checkmated.

Since that time, a concurrence of circumſtances,

ſtances, by which the French miniſtry prudently profited, has beſtowed Lorraine on France according to her ancient views, ſuch as were propoſed in the times of Louis XIV. It ſhould ſeem that what we call Fortune played her part in this game. The players withdrew in good time, and returned as opportunely to win the ſtakes.

The French miniſtry, at firſt, it ſhould ſeem, had ſo little inclination to war that, a year previous to its declaration, the payment of the ſubſidies to Sweden and Denmark had ceaſed.

I may compare France to a wealthy man, ſurrounded by people who progreſſively ruin themſelves, and who buys their eſtates at a low price. It is nearly thus that this great body, united under one deſpotic chief, has ſwallowed up Roſſillon, Alſatia, Franche Comté, the half of Flanders, Lorraine, &c. Your royal highneſs remembers the ſerpent with ſeveral heads, and the ſerpent with ſeveral tails. The latter found paſſage where the former could not.

May I take the liberty to requeſt your royal highneſs would deign to inform me whether it is an opinion unanimouſly received, in the Empire, that Lorraine was one of its provinces; for it ſeems to me that the dukes of Lorraine did not think ſo, and even that it was not in

quality

quality of dukes of Lorraine that they held a ſeat in the diet. Your royal highneſs knows that the Germanic juriſprudence is divided in opinion, on many articles; but your ſentence ſhall be my code. Would that only minds like yours might make laws! There would then be no need of interpreters. Reflecting on all the events which have happened in our times, I begin to believe that all affairs are tranſacted between crowned heads much in the ſame manner as between private perſons; each has received from nature a deſire for perſonal aggrandiſement; an opportunity ſeems to preſent itſelf, this is improved by intrigue; ſome woman is bribed by money, or a ſtronger motive, and oppoſes the negotiation; another renews it; circumſtances, ill humour, caprice, contempt, a very nothing decides the event. If the ducheſs of Marlborough had not thrown a glaſs of water in the face of Mrs. Maſham, and ſprinkled queen Anne, the queen would not have thrown herſelf into the arms of the tories, nor have granted France a peace, without which France no longer could have ſtood her ground.

M. de Torcy has proteſted to me that he knew nothing of the will of Charles II. of Spain; that, after the thing had been done, an extraordinary council was aſſembled at Verſailles, to

determine whether this will, which was to change the face of Europe, and elevate the houſe of Bourbon without aggrandizing France, ſhould be accepted; or whether they ſhould abide by a partition treaty, which ſhould diſmember the Spaniſh monarchy, and beſtow all Flanders and Lorraine on France. The chancellor de Ponchartrain was of the latter opinion, and maintained it with vehemence. Louis XIV. and his ſon, the great Dauphin, thought rather like fathers than like kings, and the will was accepted; the conſequence was that fatal war which made both the Spaniſh and French monarchy totter.

It ſhould ſeem there is an evil genius that takes pleaſure in diſappointing the hopes of men, and in ſporting with the fate of empires. Four years ago, any man would have aſtoniſhed the people of Florence, who ſhould have told them a man ſhall come from Auſtraſia, to be your prince.

It is believed in Europe that the ſyſtem of Law had made all the money of the kingdom of France fly into the coffers of the regent, and I perceive that this opinion has reached even your royal highneſs. It certainly has the appearance of probability, but the fact is that Law, who came to France worth fifty thouſand livres, died a ruined man; and that the late duke of Orleans

was

was ſeven millions of livres in debt, at his death, which his ſon found it very difficult to pay.

Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraiſemblable. *

Not that I think this frolickſome evil genius, that turns the world upſide down, and laughs at mankind, performs all himſelf. Thoſe powers which, in the ſucceſſion of ages, or from war, marriage, &c. are become ſtronger than their neighbours, exert themſelves to the utmoſt to engulph them; like as the rich lord oppreſſes the poor cottager; and this is called being a great politician. But this is what your adorable mind calls great injuſtice! Acts of horror! Your policy conſiſts in preventing oppreſſion. Every ſovereign ought to have engraved upon their council board, and on their ſword blades, the words with which your royal highneſs concludes: "To loſe provinces is opprobrious and "ignominious; and to conquer thoſe over "which we have no legal claim is unjuſt and "criminal rapacity." This is the maxim of a great man, and the pledge of happineſs to a whole people.

You royal highneſs muſt indulge an idea which has more than once entered my mind. When I

* Truth may ſometimes be improbable.

have perceived the houſe of Auſtria ready to become extinct, I have ſaid to myſelf, why ſhould not the princes of the oppoſite communion to the court of Rome have their turn? Is there no prince among them ſufficiently powerful to procure his own election? Might he not be aided by Sweden and Denmark; and, if ſuch a prince ſhould poſſeſs virtue and money, might not the odds be in his favour? Might not the empire be rendered alternate, like certain biſhoprics, which are this time held by a Lutheran, and the next by a Catholic.

Let me beg your royal highneſs to pardon me this volume of Arabian night tales.

> Cum canerem reges et prælia, Cynthius aurem
> Vellit et admonuit.

Perhaps your royal highneſs is at preſent either at Cleves or Weſel. Why am not I upon the frontiers? Madame du Chatelet had a great deſire to be there; ſhe had even planned a journey toward Treves, that ſhe might endeavour to ſee the Solomon of the North. A man of the family of du Chatelet poſſeſſes a ſmall principality between Treves and Juliers, which might be ſold, and which, perhaps, might ſuit his majeſty. Madame du Chatelet would have much influence, were ſuch a ſale to take place; and

and it would be a fine opportunity for her to pay her compliments to the moſt reſpectable prince of Europe. The queen of Sheba would go with great pleaſure to conſult the youthful Solomon; but I very much fear that this flattering idea likewiſe belongs to the thouſand and one nights.

The ſieur Thiriot has been gallant enough to inform me of a ſhort ſaying of your royal highneſs, which indicated that your goodneſs toward me was in no manner diminiſhed, by I know not what contemptible pamphlets, which occaſionally appear againſt me at Paris—againſt me and againſt others much better than I am. Theſe pamphlets, which Thiriot ſends your royal highneſs, would give you an ill opinion of the underſtanding of the French, did you not previouſly know that ſuch wretched works are the offſpring of the lees of Parnaſſus, by whom they are written rather from motives of hunger than anger. It is intereſt that writes; but it is ſometimes ſecret jealouſy which diſtributes and gives them reputation.

It is very true that the marchioneſs du Chatelet wrote an eſſay on the nature of fire, for the prize of the academy of ſciences; and it is equally true that ſhe merited a part in the prize, which ſhe would have received at any tribunal, that

excepted, which ſtill is ſubjected to the laws of Deſcartes, and believes in a plenum.

She will not fail to do herſelf the honour to ſend your royal highneſs this eſſay, which you have deigned to demand, and which is worthy of ſuch a judge. She joins me in every reſpectful ſentiment.

I am, with all the veneration, gratitude, and attachment which I owe your royal highneſs, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Auguſt, 1738.

I CONTINUALLY perceive, ſir, and with a kind of ſatisfaction which approaches pride, that the little contrarieties I meet with from my country anger the noble heart of your royal highneſs. You cannot doubt that your ſuffrage amply rewards me for all ſuch afflictions; afflictions that are common to every man of ſcience or of letters, among whom thoſe who have moſt loved the truth have always been the moſt perſecuted.

Detraction

Detraction endeavoured to effect the ruin of Descartes and Bayle; Racine and Boileau would have died with grief, had they not found a protector in Louis XIV. There are verses still in being that were written against Virgil. I am far from being the equal of these great men; but I am much more happy than they were. I enjoy tranquillity, have a fortune suitable to a private person, and more than sufficient for a philosopher. I live in a delightful retreat, with one of the most respectable of women, whose company continually affords me new lessons; and, in fine, sir, you, the most virtuous, the most amiable prince in Europe, have deigned to love me, have deigned to open your heart to me, to trust me with your works and thoughts, and to correct mine.—What need I more!—Health only is wanting; but there is no valetudinarian so happy as I am.

Will your royal highness permit me to send you the half of the fifth act of Merope, which I have corrected? If, after reading it again, the piece should appear worthy of publication, perhaps I shall venture to send it to the press.

The marchioness du Chatelet has just received the plan of Remusberg, drawn by that amiable man whom the inhabitants of Cirey continually keep in remembrance. It is very

vexatious that all this is only to be ſeen upon paper, &c.

[*The reſt is wanting.*]

LETTER LXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Auguſt, 1738.

WHEN waning life had almoſt fled,
Your preſent rais'd me from the dead:
I ſaw the medium, when it came,
Of all my pleaſure, all your fame.
But, ah! what labours muſt produce
The gift, if put to worthy uſe!
He who Achilles' lance would wield
Should bear, at leaſt, Patroclus' ſhield!
Can he who holds th' Orphean lyre,
The lifeleſs ſtock and ſtone inſpire,
Bacchantes humanize, or quell
The triple-headed dog of hell,
Or emulate the bard of Thrace,
Who wants his ſweetneſs and his grace?
Let him the lance and lyre reſign,
In whom ſuch gifts can ne'er combine!

But different, ſir, was your intent;
To Emily was the preſent ſent:

To

To Emily, who, great prince, before
She had your boon, poſſeſs'd your lore!
Heav'n, for the good of all mankind,
Beſtow'd on each an equal mind!
Thus to Minerva Mars himſelf commends,
And thus the godlike Ægis greeting ſends.

Nothing leſs than your royal highneſs and Emily could inſpire me with ſtrength ſufficient to write. I have been very near viſiting the kingdom which Orpheus charmed, and whence I ſhould not have wiſhed to return, except to ſee Emily, and you, ſir.

You do not think, perhaps, that I have ſufficiently corrected Merope. I attempted in the beginning to imitate the marquis Maffei; for I paſſionately delight in proving the merits of foreign works to my own nation. But, by degrees, as I proceeded in my labours, Merope became wholly French. Thanks to your ſage remarks, it is as much yours as mine. I, therefore, requeſt permiſſion, when I print it, to dedicate the tragedy to you, and lay it at your feet, together with my ideas on this kind of writing. I know not whether your royal highneſs has received the new edition of the elements of Newton. Having condeſcended to intereſt yourſelf ſo far in my behalf as to inform me that M. s'Graveſande does not ſpeak well

of

of it, I can only ſay, this gives me no ſurpriſe.

The bookſellers or pirates of Holland, impatient for the ſale of the work, thought proper to patch up the two laſt chapters by a Dutch metaphyſician, who, for his part, thought proper to controvert the opinions of M. s'Graveſande. In theſe two chapters, he denies the two fineſt reſults of the Newtonian ſyſtem, the explanation of the tides, and the cauſe of the preceſſion of the equinoxes, which follows without difficulty from the protuberance of the earth at the equator. M. s'Graveſande is with good reaſon attached to theſe two great points. The book is beſide printed with a hundred ridiculous errors. The French edition, under the name of London, is a little more correct. The Carteſians exclaim like madmen, who perceive an attempt made to deprive them of the imaginary treaſures on which they feaſted; they ſuppoſe themſelves reduced to wretchedneſs, if there be any vacuum in nature; the ſame as if they had been robbed; and ſome of them are very ſeriouſly angry. For my own part, I ſhall take care to be angry at nothing ſo long as *divus Fredericus et diva Emilia* honour me with their friendſhip.

We have received ſome further information concerning

concerning this Beringhen, which is a town lying between the countries of Liege and Juliers. Should that correſpond with the intentions of his majeſty, and ſhould he deign to honour the owner with the title of his ſubject, every law would be ſubmitted to, as in reaſon it ought, which his majeſty ſhall deign to preſcribe. Madame du Chatelet has not dared to mention the affair to your royal highneſs, but ſhe has requeſted me to venture to demand your protection. We ſhall act in this buſineſs according to your orders. Madame du Chatelet has juſt ſent a perſon to the place, who is an advocate of Lorraine.

Should the affair take the turn I wiſh, it will not be difficult to induce the marquis du Chatelet to make a ſhort journey thither. I can alſo foreſee that I may, with all poſſible decorum, though it ſhould be publiſhed in every gazette, come and throw myſelf at the feet of your royal highneſs, and ſee him whom I admire.

I hope that your other ſubject, M. Thiriot, will come, for a few days, to our caſtle at Cirey. Your worſhip will then be perfect there, and we ſhall chant hymns dictated by the heart.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and that tender gratitude which daily augments, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, Auguſt, 1738.

YOUR royal highneſs reproaches me, according to M. Thiriot, for ſuffering my occupations rather than illneſs to be the cauſe of my ſilence. But I have done myſelf the honour to write by M. Plœtz, and M. Thiriot, and now I write a third letter, ſo that your royal highneſs may rather, at preſent, complain of my importunity.

This, ſir, neither relates to the belles lettres, poetry, philoſophy, nor hiſtory, but is an additional liberty which I venture to take with your royal highneſs, treſpaſſing upon your indulgence and your goodneſs.

I have had the honour to mention a ſmall principality to your royal highneſs, ſituated toward Liege and Juliers, which is called Beringhen. It conſiſts of Ham and Beringhen, and appertains to the marquis de Trichâteau, in his mother's right, who was of the houſe of Honſbruk.

There are ſome incumbrances on it, and madame du Chatelet, who has full powers to diſpoſe of it, is very deſirous that this ſmall corner

of

of land, which is not held of any perſon might be found ſuitable to his majeſty, the king your father. Five or ſix hundred thouſand florins, which may be the worth of the eſtate, make but an acceſſary circumſtance of the buſineſs; the principal will be, the queen of Sheba will repair thither to behold the Solomon of Europe. Your royal highneſs knows I ſhall be of the party, and the country of Juliers will then indeed become the promiſed land where I ſhall ſee *ſalutare meum.*

Perhaps I know not what I ſay, but the truth is I have ſuppoſed that, ſhould ſuch a propoſal for ſale be convenient to the intereſts of his majeſty, I ſhall not then have committed any political treaſon, and that the miniſters of his majeſty would afford no oppoſition, ſhould your royal highneſs make or cauſe the propoſal to be made. I intreat your royal highneſs firſt to inform yourſelf relative to the eſtate, and its rights and privileges, as well as the preciſe diſtrict in which it is ſituated, with which I am unacquainted.

I underſtand nothing of politics, I only perfectly underſtand the ſentiments of zeal, reſpect, admiration, and I had almoſt ſaid the tenderneſs with which I am, &c.

The marquis and marchioneſs du Chatelet

are

are in prefent poffeffion of this fmall principality, which has been adjudged to them according to a donation made to them by the marquis de Trichâteau: but they do not receive any of the rents, which are left untouched to pay off incumbrances.

LETTER LXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Bruffels, September 1ft, 1738.

HER yellow wine Hungaria fends,
To cheer the princely Frederic's friends;
Duke Aremberg foon granted leave
His well-ftor'd cellar fhould receive
The precious balm; the friendly boon,
By Voltaire being tafted, foon
Shall, to his pulfe-forfaken heart,
Warm renovating life impart!
The fmiling Emily too fhall quaff
Such nectar as the gods makes laugh!
What drug, that pharmacy can yield,
So well can man from mifery fhield?
Good doctor Superville, adieu!
No more I need your draughts or you;
No more I'll take your naufeous pills;
I've found a cure for all my ills:
You cannot think it much amifs
That Frederic my phyfician is!

No

No cuſtom will you have of mine—
Sir, he preſcribes me gen'rous wine!
No more need I my guineas give,
I've but to drink your health and live.

M. Schelling has informed me, ſir, ſome days ſince, of the ſafe landing of this good wine in the cellar of the patron of that liquor; and the duke d'Aremberg will give us the godlike tun on his return from Enguien. But the letter of your royal highneſs, dated June the 26th, and brought us by the aforeſaid M. Schelling, is worth the whole diſtrict of Tokay.

Enchanting prince, ſay by what art,
What various ways thou win'ſt the heart!
That hand which ſweeps th' Horatian lyre
Snatches the pen in virtuous ire,
And ſtraight thy potent words diſpel
The baneful charms of Machiavel!
Yes, wondrous prince, thee Heav'n deſign'd
To teach and captivate mankind.
Ye kings! whom men are bade revere,
Look up and learn your duties here!
Liſten, if well ye wiſh to reign—
Alas! I call, but call in vain!

Yet, with all thoſe light graces, ſo charmingly ſcattered through your letter, M. Schelling further ſwears the regiment of your royal highneſs is the fineſt regiment in Pruſſia, and con-

ſequently the fineſt in the world; for *omne tulit punctum* is your motto.

Your royal highneſs, at preſent, returns to viſit your northern ſubjects, and will add an additional glow to the climate. Nay, I am certain, whenever I ſhall come thither (and thither I ſhall come, without doubt, for I ſhall not die without having paid obedience to my prince) I ſhall find the heat greater at Remuſberg than at Freſcati. Philoſophers would in vain pretend that the earth has approached the ſun. They form fooliſh ſyſtems; I ſhall learn the truth from experience.

Your royal highneſs has informed me that you found it neceſſary to read many books for the compoſition of your Anti-Machiavel; but ſo much the better; your reading will not be labour in vain. Inferior metals will be tranſmuted into gold, in your crucible. There are the political diſcourſes of Gordon, which precede his tranſlation of Tacitus, and which are well worthy of being examined by a reader like my prince. Yet what need has Hercules of aid to ſtrangle Antæus, or to exterminate Cacus?

I am going hard to work, that I may finiſh the ſmall tribute which I have promiſed my only maſter. In a fortnight you will have the ſecond act of Mahomet: the firſt already ought to

have come to hand, by the ſame conveyance, that of the ſieurs Gerard and company.

There is a new edition of my works printing in Holland; but your royal highneſs poſſeſſes many of them which the bookſellers have never yet printed. I will acknowledge no other Henriade than that which is honoured by your name and your favours. It certainly was not I who wrote the other Henriades.

I quit the company of my prince to work at Mahomet, and am, &c. &c.

LETTER LXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

Remuſberg,
September 11, 1738.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A JOURNEY ſufficiently long, ſufficiently fatiguing, abounding with incidents, occupations, and ſtill more with diſſipation, has prevented my anſwering your letter of the 5th of Auguſt, which only came to hand, at Berlin, on the 3d of September.

No perſon leſs eloquent than yourſelf ſo well could have defended and palliated the conduct of your miniſtry in the affair of Poland; you

will render a ſignal ſervice to your country, ſhould you be able to convince Europe that the intentions of France were always conformable to the manifeſto of the year 1733. You cannot imagine how many prejudices are entertained againſt Gallic policy, and you know the potency of prejudice. I am extremely flattered by the approbation which you and the marchioneſs beſtow on my work, which will encourage me to do better.

I will now anſwer all your interrogations, charmed that you have ſtated them, and ready to produce my authorities. What I ſaid concerning the project of marſhal Villars, which the French miniſtry have adopted, is no joke, but ſerious aſſertion; and is ſo true, that information of it has been received from more perſons than one; and this formidable project incites intrigues among ſeveral powers. A ſucceſſion of years only will ſhew us all the fatal conſequences which may follow. Either I am much deceived, or this project prepares events, ſuch as overturn empires, and ſuch as will change the face of Europe.

The compariſon you have made between France and a prudent and wealthy man, ſurrounded by poor and prodigal neighbours, is as happy a one as can be imagined; it forcibly depicts

depicts the powers of the French, and the feebleness of surrounding provinces; shews the reason of the difference, and permits the imagination to penetrate into future ages, and there to behold the continual increase of the French monarchy, flowing from one constant uniform principle; a power united under a despotic chief, and which, according to all appearances, will one day swallow up its neighbours.

Thus it is that she has acquired Lorraine, from the disunion of the empire and the weakness of the emperor. Lorraine has, in all ages, been supposed a fief of the empire; it was formerly a part of the circle of Burgundy, which was dismembered from the empire by this same France. The dukes of Lorraine, in all ages, had a seat in the diet. They have always paid their Roman months, furnished their contingencies in time of war, and fulfilled all the duties of princes of the empire. True it is the duke Charles often embraced the part either of France or Spain; but he was not less a member of the empire. Thus the elector of Bavaria commanded the armies of Louis XIV. against those of the emperor and his allies.

You very judiciously remark that the men who ought to be the most consistent, those who govern kingdoms, and who, in a word, decide

on the happineſs or miſery of nations, are ſometimes thoſe who commit the moſt to chance. The reaſon is theſe kings, princes, and miniſters, like private perſons, are no more than men; and the whole difference between them and people of an inferior rank conſiſts in the importance of their actions. A fountain which throws up water three feet high is as much a fountain as another which throws the water a hundred feet; the real difference between them is in the efficacious power of the projection. A queen of England, ſurrounded by a female court, will always impart ſomething to her government which ſhall partake of her ſex; I mean to ſay of whim and caprice.

I believe that the oaths of miniſters and lovers are nearly of equal value. M. Torcy may have told you what he pleaſed, but I ſhall always ſuſpect the words of a man who is accuſtomed to give them different interpretations. Such men are a kind of prophets, who diſcover a wonderful affinity between what they have ſaid and what they meant to have ſaid. Nothing was more eaſy for M. Torcy than to put words into the mouth of Pontchartrain, Louis XIV. or the Dauphin; he did but aſſume the office

office of a good dramatic writer, who makes each perſon ſpeak in character.

I confeſs I partook of the prejudice, which is almoſt univerſal, relative to the Regent. It has been loudly aſſerted he very conſiderably enriched himſelf by ſtockjobbing. One of the clerks of law, who at that time retired to Berlin, has even aſſured the king that he had received a commiſſion from the Regent to tranſmit very conſiderable ſums that were to be placed in the bank of Amſterdam. I am glad to find this was calumny. I intereſt myſelf in the memory of the Regent as of a man endowed with ſuperior genius, and who, after having acknowledged the wrong he did the nation, loaded it with favours. I am certain to think juſtly when I agree with you. This is a touchſtone on which I can always try the value of my thoughts. Humanity, that moſt commendable virtue, and which includes all the others, ought, according to me, to be the inheritance of every rational man; and, though it were extinct in the world beſide, ſtill it ſhould live immortal in the hearts of princes.

Your ideas are too much to my advantage. The politician Voltaire wiſhes me the imperial crown; the philoſopher Voltaire intreats Heaven would deign to give me wiſdom; and Voltaire,

my friend, can wiſh me nothing except his company which can render me happy. No, my dear friend, I have no deſire for grandeur; and if grandeur ſhould come it will come unſought for.

The projected journey is, to my regret, a little too late, and perhaps will, to my misfortune, never take place, though it would have given me ſupreme happineſs. Had I ſeen you and the marchioneſs, I ſhould have imagined I had profited more by the expedition than Clairaut, Maupertuis, La Condamine, and all your academicians who have ſailed ſo far in order to find a line. Men of wit, in my opinion, are the quinteſſence of the human ſpecies; and I ſhould, at a ſingle glance, have ſeen the fineſt flower of the wreath. I might accuſe your imagination and that of the divine Emily of indolence in not having formed ſuch a project ſooner. It is now too late, and I can ſee but one remedy, which remedy is not very diſtant; I allude to the death of the elector palatine, of which I will give you timely notice. Would to Heaven you and the marchioneſs could come to that eſtate, where I might then moſt aſſuredly enjoy a happineſs ſo dear and delicious!

I am enraged againſt your nation, and the chiefs of your nation, for not repreſſing the cruel

fury

fury of your perſecutors. When the venom of envy withers your laurel, the laurel of France withers at the ſame moment; and to ſuffer this with impunity is cowardice. I cannot forbear exclaiming againſt it, nor can your generoſity afford any real excuſe *.

I am highly obliged to the marchioneſs for her diſſertation on fire, which ſhe means to ſend me. I will read it for my own inſtruction; and ſhould I expreſs any trifling doubts, it will only be that I may the better find the road of truth. Be kind enough to offer a thouſand aſſurances of eſteem to her in my behalf.

Incloſed is a piece newly finiſhed, the firſt fruits of my retreat, and which I offer to you as the pagans offered their firſt-fruits to their deities. I requeſt in return ſincerity, truth and frankneſs. I think myſelf happy to poſſeſs a friend of your merit. Let me intreat you ever to remain my friend, and to be only the friend; for this character will render you ſtill more amiable, if poſſible, in my eyes.

I am,

With all imaginable eſteem, &c.

* The Baſil edition adds—"Forgive them, Lord; they "know not what they do." T.

LETTER LXVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

Remusberg,
MY DEAR FRIEND, September 14, 1738.

I HAVE this moment received your letter, of the 8th August, which, unfortunately, arrived too late. We have been returned from the country of Cleves above a fortnight, which entirely impedes the execution of your project. I have every obligation to your friendship, and the kind attentions of the marchioness. Nothing, certainly, can be more flattering than the plan of the divine Emily. I, however, believe that, notwithstanding * the advantage of acquisition, and the purchase of a lordship, I should not have enjoyed the ineffable happiness of seeing you both. Some learned dull counsellor would have been sent to Ham, who would most methodically, and most scrupulously, have drawn up the conditions of sale; would have wearied you magnificently, and, after having gone through all requisite formalities, would have signed the deed with a scientific flourish.

* The Berlin edition reads—*without* the advantage, &c.—This must be erroneous. T.

On

On his return, I ſhould have had the barren advantage of interrogating him concerning all he had heard and ſeen; and, Mr. Counſellor, inſtead of ſpeaking to me of Voltaire and Emily, would have entertained me with acres of land, manor rights and privileges, and with all the jargon of the ſecretaries of Plutus.

I imagine if the marchioneſs will wait till the death of the elector palatine, whoſe age and health threaten diſſolution, ſhe may then diſpoſe of this eſtate with more facility. I have ſome ſuppoſition, though I know not very well why, that the diſpute concerning ſucceſſion will revive next ſpring. Our march into the country of Juliers and Berg will then be an infallible conſequence. Should this happen, might not the marchioneſs repair to her lordſhip, which is in the neighbourhood of theſe duchies; and might not the worthy Voltaire make a ſhort excurſion, as far as the Pruſſian camp? I would prepare every thing for your convenience: you ſhould have a good houſe in the village neareſt to the camp, where I ſhould be near to viſit you, or from which you might come to my tent, in a ſhort time, according as your health ſhould permit. Let me intreat you to reflect on this, and to tell me frankly what you can effect in my favour. Do not, however, venture any thing

thing which may cauſe you the leaſt chagrin on the part of your court. I would not pay the price of making you unhappy, in order to ſecure my own felicity. The marchioneſs, from whom I have juſt received a letter, tells me that ſhe depends on my diſcretion with reſpect to all the manuſcript pieces which your friendſhip has beſtowed on me. I hope you do not entertain the leaſt inquietude on this head. You know what I have promiſed you; not to mention that indiſcretion is not one of my defects. When I receive any new works from you, I read them in the preſence of Kayſerling and Jordan; after which I conſide them to memory, and retain them like the words of Moſes, with which the kings of Iſrael were obliged to make themſelves familiar. They are then ſhut up in the back cabinet of my archives, from which I never take them, except to read them alone.

Your letters are treated the ſame; and, though our correſpondence is ſuſpected, no perſon is poſitively certain of the fact. Nor do my precautions end here. I have guarded againſt accidents, and my ſervants have orders to burn a certain packet, ſhould I fall into any extreme danger. My life has been one chain of vexation, and the ſchool of adverſity renders men

circumſpect, diſcreet, and compaſſionate. They are attentive to their ſmalleſt actions when they reflect on the conſequences that may follow, and are very willing to ſpare others the affliction they have felt.

If your labours and your aſſiduity prevent you from writing to me, far from blaming, I am but the more obliged to you. You labour for my happineſs; and, when illneſs interrupts our correſpondence, I accuſe fate, and ſuffer in company with you.

The philoſophic ode I have received is perfect; the thoughts are radically true, which is the principal circumſtance; they poſſeſs that air of novelty which ſtrikes, and are dreſſed in that poetic ſtyle which ſo agreeably flatters the ear. Wit is there reſplendent, and my applauſe is due to this excellent ode; nor is flattery neceſſary, but truth only, in beſtowing this applauſe. The ſtanza which begins—*Tandis que des humains*—is infinitely comprehenſive. At Paris it would form the ſubject of a comedy; at London, Pope would turn it into an epic poem; and, in Germany, my good countrymen would find ſufficient materials from which to hammer out a well-conditioned folio of ample ſize. I eſteem you equally, my dear Proteus, whether you appear in the character of philoſo-

pher,

pher, politician, hiſtorian, or poet, or in what ever other form it ſhall pleaſe you to aſſume. The ſtrength of your mind in ſubjects ſo oppoſite appears equal: it is a diamond which reflects rays of every colour, all of which alike are dazzling.

I more than ever recommend to you the care of your health, great attention to diet, and few philoſophic experiments. Let me hear from you, at leaſt, though you ſhould not be able to write yourſelf. I proteſt you are the very oppoſite of indifferent to me; I ſeem to have a kind of mortgage upon you, which conſiſts in the eſteem I bear you. I muſt hear of my property, and when I do not my fertile fancy conjures up monſters and phantoms for me to combat. Remain ever perſuaded of the ſentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Remuſberg, September 30, 1738.

WHAT! On the black Cocytian ſhore,
Where others their hard fate deplore,
Thy voice melodious canſt thou raiſe,
And though expiring ſing my praiſe!

The

The houſe of harmony canſt thou
Make that which is the houſe of woe!
Divine Voltaire!——Though ill, thy muſe
Ten thouſand rival bards ſubdues;
Alike the poet and the ſage,
Of ev'ry moſt renowned age,
However witty, wiſe, or vaſt,
Thy vig'rous genius hath ſurpaſs'd!
Profound in knowledge, thou wert born
The world t' enlighten and adorn,
To free and form a ſtupid race,
Whom zeal and ignorance debaſe.
May that humanity which guides
Thy pen, and o'er thy works preſides,
Conquer mankind; till reaſon builds a throne
Where thou ſhalt reign, with honours all thy own.

Do not, at leaſt, ſuppoſe that I write in verſe purpoſely to enter the liſts with you. I ſtammering anſwer in a language which Voltaire and the Gods only are allowed to ſpeak. You daily increaſe my apprehenſions, concerning the precarious ſtate of your health. Since fate, which governs the world, was unable to unite all the powers of mind which you poſſeſs with a robuſt and healthy body, how can it be expected that we poor mortal governors ſhould not commit errors?

I have received the epiſtle on Moderation * from Paris, with corrections and additions.

* Epître ſur la modération.

Among

Among other paſſages, the allegoric deſcription of Cirey gave me great pleaſure. The piece is much improved, and I will own that the phyſician who came, ſat down, and fell aſleep, did not ſatisfy me. Is there not ſomething trifling in the dog that dies while licking his maſter's hand; ſomething beneath the beauties which in other reſpects abound ſo much in this epiſtle? I tell you my opinion leſs as a critic than from a deſire to form my taſte. Have the goodneſs to anſwer and inform me of your ſentiments.

If I may judge from the corrections made in Merope, it muſt be a finiſhed piece. I have had no greater part in them than that which the people of Athens had in the works of Phidias, and the old woman of Moliere in his comedies. I divine the paſſages which you would correct, and you have not only retouched them but have effaced other faults, which I was unable to diſcover. I am infinitely obliged to you for your intention to inſert my name at the head of this fine tragedy. My fate will reſemble that of Atticus, who was immortalized by the letters which were addreſſed to him by Cicero.

Thiriot has ſent me the London edition of the Newtonian philoſophy; I have run it through, but I will read it again, with greater attention. According to the manner in which you explain the

the trade of the Dutch bookſellers, it is by no means aſtoniſhing that s'Graveſande ſhould riſe in arms againſt your tranſlation.

Does it not appear to you that there is as much incertitude in phyſics as in metaphyſics? I behold myſelf every where ſurrounded by doubt, and, when I think I have graſped truth, I examine it, and acknowledge how unſubſtantial was the ground on which I formed my judgment. Nor, with your leave, are mathematical truths exempt from doubt; and, when the pro and con of propoſitions are well examined, we find equal incertitude in determining. In a word, I believe there are but very few evident truths.

Theſe conſiderations induced me to write down my opinions on error, which I have done in the form of a dialogue. My end was to ſhew that difference of opinion, among mankind, whether in philoſophy or religion, ought never to interrupt the ties of friendſhip and humanity ſubſiſting between them. It was neceſſary I ſhould prove the innocence of error, and this I did. I have done more; I have ſhewn that error which originates in the ſearch after truth, ſo long as it is not ſeen to be error, is praiſe worthy. You will determine better than I, when you have read it; and for this purpoſe I ſubmit it to your criticiſm.

I believe

I believe it would not be proper, at preſent, to attempt any thing concerning the buſineſs of Beringhen. We are here in daily expectation of new events, and you will eaſily comprehend that men who ſeriouſly prepare for war allot but little time to other affairs. It is my opinion, therefore, that we muſt wait till the ſkain is unravelled, which ſoon muſt happen, the ſituation of affairs conſidered; and, when we ſhall be in poſſeſſion of theſe duchies, it will be much more natural for us to endeavour to connect and make ſuch acquiſitions as that of the lordſhip of Beringhen. My projects then may take place, becauſe the king, finding himſelf in his own country, may go in perſon to examine whether the acquiſition be ſuitable. I refer in other reſpects to my laſt letter, in which I have circumſtantially related the extent of my hopes, and the manner in which I flatter myſelf with obtaining a ſight of you.

Thiriot ſhould now be at Cirey. And am I the only perſon that am for ever to be baniſhed the place? My curioſity is very great to know how you have anſwered madame de Brand. All I am informed of is that there are ſome verſes in your anſwer; let me beg of you to be communicative.

The marchioneſs ſhall have as many pens as

it

it ſhall pleaſe her to break*, and it ſhall be my province to provide a ſupply. I have already written to Pruſſia for this purpoſe, and for other things which were omitted when the ink-ſtand was ſent. Aſſure this ſingular marchioneſs of my attention and my eſteem.

I am ever, and more than you can imagine, &c.

LETTER LXX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remuſberg,
November 9, 1738.

I HAVE juſt received a letter and verſes ſuch as you only are capable of writing; but if I have the advantage of thus receiving letters and verſes, ſuperior in beauty to every thing which has ever appeared, I am alſo in the dilemma of not knowing how to anſwer. You ſend me gold from your Potoſi, and I have only lead to return. After having read the charming lines which you have addreſſed to me, I more

* The marchioneſs had broken an amber pen which had been ſent her.

than once hesitated concerning sending you the epistle on humanity, which you will receive with this letter. But, at length, I said, homage must be paid at Cirey, and it is necessary to send thither in search of instruction and sage reproof. These motives, I hope, will induce you to accept the bad verses I return you, and grant them your protection.

Thiriot has just remitted me the work of the marchioness, on fire. I can truly affirm I was astonished while I read! No one could imagine such a work had been written by a woman. The style is masculine, and entirely suitable to the subject. You are both very admirable and singular people of your kind, and daily increase the admiration of those to whom you are known. I often have ideas on this subject which your modesty obliges me to conceal. The pagans have deified persons who certainly were far inferior to you both. Had you lived in those ages you would have been the first of the Olympian gods.

Nothing more strongly marks the difference of manners, between the present and those ancient times, than a comparison of the mode in which antiquity treated great men, with the mode in which they are treated in this age. Magnanimity, grandeur of mind, and fortitude,

 are

are held to be chimerical virtues. I hear people exclaim—" Pſhaw! You pretend to act the " Roman when it is no longer the faſhion; the " preſent age treats ſuch affectation with con- " tempt."—So much the worſe; the Romans who *pretended* to virtue were great men; and why not imitate them in what was praiſe-worthy?

Greece was ſo proud of having produced Homer that more than ten cities diſputed the honour of his birth; yet the Homer of France, and the moſt reſpectable man of the whole nation, is expoſed to the ſhafts of envy.

Virgil, in deſpite of the verſes which ſome obſcure rhymers wrote, peaceably enjoyed the protection of Auguſtus and Mæcenas; like as Boileau, Racine, and Corneille, did that of Louis the Great. You are deprived of theſe advantages; and, to own the truth, I do not believe your fame will be any ſufferer by the loſs. The applauſe of a ſage, of an Emily, muſt, to any man of ſound ſenſe, be preferable to that of the throne. Your mind is not enſlaved, nor is your muſe enchained to the chariot wheels of the great; you are of higher worth, which is an irrevocable teſtimony of your ſincerity; for it is well known that ſuch worth has, in all ages, been found incompatible with the mean flattery which prevails in courts.

The hiſtory of Louis XIV. which I have juſt read, once more feels the good effects of your abode at Cirey. The work is excellent, nor does the world afford ſuch another; I earneſtly requeſt you to let me have the continuation; but, as a friend, I adviſe you not to ſend it to preſs. The deſcendants of all thoſe of whom you have ſpoken the truth will league againſt you. Some will affirm you have ſaid too much; and others that you have not been ſufficiently copious on the virtues of their anceſtors. The prieſts, that implacable race, will never pardon the little traits by which they are occaſionally attacked. I dare even venture to affirm that this hiſtory, written with truth, and in a philoſophic ſpirit, ought never to depart from the circle of philoſophers: it is not adapted to people who do not know how to think.

Your two letters have produced very different effects on the perſons to whom they were addreſſed. Ceſario, who had the gout, loſt his diſeaſe with joy; and Jordan, who was in good health, was in danger of an apoplectic fit. Of ſuch very different effects may the ſame cauſe be productive. They muſt explain their feelings themſelves; they will perform the taſk much better than I can.

Remuſberg only wants a Voltaire to be perfectly

fectly happy. Notwithſtanding your abſence, your image is, if I may ſo ſay, innate in our hearts; you are ever preſent with us, your portrait hangs in my library, above the caſe which contains your golden fleece; it is placed immediately over your works, and oppoſite where I ſit, ſo that I have it always before me. I had almoſt ſaid this portrait reſembles the ſtatue of Memnon, which yielded a harmonious ſound when ſtruck by the rays of the ſun; and after the ſame manner your portrait animates thoſe who look on it. To me it ſeems to ſay,

O vous donc qui brulant d'une ardeur perilleuſe— *

Remember always, I beſeech you, the little flock of Remuſberg, and ſo remember as to addreſs your paſtoral letters to this flock. Theſe are neceſſary ſources of conſolation during your abſence; you owe them to your friends, at the head of whom I hope you will place me; for no one can be more ardently your friend than I am, and ſhall ever remain, &c.

* Oh ye who burn with ardour perilous—

BOILEAU.

LETTER LXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, October, 1738.

YOUR royal highneſs will pardon a poor invalid, who is enriched by your benefactions, if he ſeem too tardy in paying the tribute of gratitude.

What you have written on the ſubject of humanity indubitably ſecures you the ſuffrage and eſteem of madame du Chatelet, and forces my admiration, had I not been previouſly diſpoſed to admire. Not only will Cirey thank your royal highneſs, there is not a perſon on earth who will not be indebted to you. If nothing but the title of the work were known, that would be ſufficient to render you the maſter of all hearts. A prince who thinks of men, and who delights in rendering them happy! It will be aſked in what romance ſuch a prince exiſts, whether his name be Alcimedon or Almanſor, and whether he be the ſon of a fairy, or of ſome genius? No, good people! Our prince is a real being; him whom Heaven has beſtowed on earth; whoſe name is Frederic, and whoſe uſual abode is in ſolitude at Remuſberg.—But why

inform

inform you of this? His name, his virtues, his underſtanding, his talents, are already known to the whole world! Had the world but ſeen what he has written on humanity, the world would ſend deputies to return him thanks. But ſuch good fortune is reſerved for Cirey, where theſe favours are kept ſecret. Thoſe who formerly undertook to conſult the demi gods boaſted of the oracles they received; we receive oracles, but we do not boaſt.

There is a ſecret ſympathy, ſir, which ſubjects my ſoul to your royal highneſs; a ſomething more powerful than pre-eſtabliſhed harmony. I was myſelf projecting an epiſtle on humanity, when I received that of your royal highneſs; and here I find my taſk completed. Antiquity tells us of people who had a genius which afforded them aid in their great enterpriſes; my genius is at Remuſberg.—Who indeed ſhould by right ſpeak of humanity; who but you, great prince, whoſe heart is generous and affectionate: you, ſir, who have deigned to conſult phyſicians in behalf of one of your ſick ſervants, who dwells near three hundred leagues from your preſence? Ah!—In deſpite of theſe three hundred leagues, I feel my heart moſt nearly allied to that of your royal highneſs.

I even flatter myſelf, with ſome appearance

of reality, that this vaſt ſpace will ſoon diſappear. Let the elector palatine die, if ſo he ſhall pleaſe; but, whether or no, the confines of Cleves and Juliers will behold madame du Chatelet at the approaching ſpring. We will take proper meaſures to be near your ſtates. I well know that in ſuch affairs we can anſwer for nothing; but the hope of paying our court to your royal highneſs, of beholding him whom we admire, and whom we at a diſtance love, will remove many difficulties. I imagine your royal highneſs will grant paſſports to madame du Chatelet; but who will ſtop her when they ſhall be informed ſhe comes thither to ſee your royal highneſs? And who will dare to do me ill, when I ſhall ſtretch my hand holding out the epiſtle on humanity?

How highly am I delighted that your royal highneſs was pleaſed with the eſſay on fire, by the marchioneſs du Chatelet, the compoſition of which ſhe made her amuſement, and which, in reality, is rather a finiſhed work than an eſſay! Were it not for the curſt vortexes of Deſcartes, which ſtill whirl in the old heads of the academy, madame du Chatelet would certainly have obtained the prize; which act of juſtice would have done honour to her ſex and her judges. But prejudice reigns every where abſolute.

Newton

Newton has in vain diſcovered the ſecrets of light. There are old romantic philoſophers who perſiſt to maintain the chimeras of Mallebranche. The academy will one day bluſh at their tardineſs to ſee the truth; and it will remain on record that a young lady dared to embrace ſound philoſophy, when moſt of her judges feebly ſtudied it only to afford obſtinate oppoſition.

M. de Maupertuis, a man who dares to love and ſpeak truth, though perſecuted, has boldly, though ſecretly, affirmed that the French diſcourſes which gained the prizes were pitiable. His ſuffrage, added to that of Remuſberg, are the higheſt reward that can be beſtowed.

Madame du Chatelet will think herſelf exceedingly flattered, ſhould your royal highneſs permit M. Jordan to read the eſſay with which you have been pleaſed. She with good reaſon eſteems the man whom you eſteem.

I am, &c.

LETTER LXXII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Remusberg,
November 22, 1738 *.

IT must be owned you are an admirable debtor, your payments are never long in arrear, and all barter with you is highly advantageous. I am under infinite obligations to you, for your epistle on pleasure. This system of theology appears to me highly worthy of the Deity, and perfectly accords with my manner of thinking. What do I not owe you for that admirable work?

The gods, by Homer sung, were bony, strong,
Robust, puissant:—Him that thunders from
The pulpit is of tyranny the type:
But thine, Voltaire, is sweet and gentle pleasure;
And thine's the true;—yes, pleasure is the God
Of minds beneficent, and glowing hearts.

They cannot better understand the difference of genius than by examining the manner in which different persons express the same thoughts. The countess de Platen, of whom you must have heard speak in England, in or-

* Dated December 1st, 1738, in the Berlin edition.

der

der to avoid uttering the word eunuch, paraphrased it by saying *a brilliant man.* Her idea was taken from a brilliant cut diamond. This mode of expression was very characteristic of woman; I mean to say of a mind inviolably attached to ornaments and trifles. The man of genius, the great poet, is manifested in a very different manner, by the following beautiful paraphrase.

He whom steel hath robbed of the sources of life.

Not to mention that there is something striking in the thought itself of a God attended by eunuchs, it marvellously expresses the idea of the poet. This manner of touching, with modesty and perspicuity, on so delicate a subject as that of *mutilation* * highly contributes to the pleasure of the reader.

It is not because this piece is addressed to me; it is not because you have been pleased to speak well of me; but it is from its own intrinsic worth that I yield it full and due praise. I much suspect that the God of the schools would gain little by passing through your hands. Do not imagine, I intreat you, that I carry my scep-

* The Berlin edition reads *circumcision*, but again, beyond doubt, erroneously.

ticism

ticiſm to exceſs. There are ſome truths ſo well proved that my reaſon does not admit of doubt. I believe, for example, that there is but one God, and one Voltaire, in the world; and I further believe that this God, in this preſent age, ſtood in need of this Voltaire to render it agreeable.

You have waſhed, cleaned, and retouched an old picture by Raphael, the traits of which had been rendered obſcure by the varniſh of ſome ignorant dauber. The principal end I propoſed in my diſſertation on error was the proof of its innocence. I have not dared to be explicit on the ſubject of religion, for which reaſon I preferred a philoſophic theme. I, nevertheleſs, reſpect Copernicus, Deſcartes, Leibnitz, and Newton; but I am not ſufficiently old to be the partiſan of either. A youth, between twenty and thirty, ſhould rather be guided by the opinions of the academy than aſſume a deciſive and dictatorial tone. We muſt begin by learning before we judge, which is what I do. I read all with an impartial mind, intending to gain inſtruction, and in obedience to your excellent remark—

"And onward were they led to truth by doubt."

I have read with admiration and aſtoniſhment the

the work of the marchioneſs, on fire; and it has given me an idea of her vaſt genius, her knowledge, and your felicity, which you too much merit for me to envy it you. Enjoy your paradiſe, but let us, who are but human ſpectators, participate your happineſs.

You may aſſure Emily that ſhe has inſpired me with a particular veneration for fire; not the fire which ſhe with ſo much ſagacity has analyſed, but that of her potent genius.

May a ſceptic be permitted to ſtate ſome doubts which have ariſen in his mind? In a philoſophic work, where truth is ſcrupulouſly ſought, are the dregs of the dreams of antiquity allowable? I beſtow this epithet on what ſeems to have eſcaped the marchioneſs, relative to the fire excited in foreſts, by the motion of the branches. I am unacquainted with the phenomena mentioned in the article of the cauſes of the freezing of water. There are ſaid to be ponds in Switzerland which are found frozen, during ſummer, in the months of June and July. My own ignorance occaſions theſe doubts. I ſhall certainly profit, for your explanation will inſtruct me.

After having ſpoken of your works, and thoſe of the marchioneſs, I ſcarcely can be permitted to mention my own. I muſt, however,

accompany

accompany this letter by a piece which I was told I muſt write. The greateſt pleaſure you can do me, next to that of ſending me your own productions, is to correct mine. I have had the good fortune to have conceived the ſame thoughts as you, which you will perceive toward the concluſion of the work. He who has little genius, who is not aided by ſome enlightened critic, and who writes in a foreign language, cannot hope any great progreſs. To rhyme in deſpite of all theſe impediments ſeems, in ſome manner, to be afflicted with the diſeaſe of the Abderitans *.

I truſt you with all my follies, which is the greateſt mark I can give of the confidence and eſteem with which I inviolably am, &c.

P. S. † I have a trifling amber toy for Cirey; and ſome Hungarian wine, which is ſaid to be balſamic, for my friend. I intend to ſend the packet through Hamburgh to Rouen, and from thence to Paris, addreſſed to Thiriot; for I do not believe that any carrier can eaſily be found who would take charge of it.

* In alluſion to Democritus, who laughed continually. T.

† The poſtſcript is omitted in the Berlin edition. T.

LET-

LETTER LXXIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, Dec. 25, 1738 *.

I HAVE lately read with much pleasure the letter addressed by you to your unfaithful editors in Holland. The part I take in your reputation induces me warmly to participate that applause which the public cannot fail to bestow on your moderation.

Such moderation ought to be the peculiar character of every man of science. That philosophy which enlightens the mind increases our knowledge of the human heart; and the most solid benefit that can be derived from it is that compassion which induces us to support the weaknesses, defects, and failings of men. It were to be wished that the learned in their disputes, divines in their quarrels, and princes in their contentions, would imitate your moderation. Knowledge, true religion, and the most dignified characters among men, ought to raise those who are in possession of them above certain passions, which ought only to be the in-

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

heritance

heritance of mean minds. Beſide that merit when acknowledged reſides in a kind of fortreſs, and is there guarded againſt the ſhafts of envy. Every arrow ſhot at an inferior enemy diſhonours the man that holds the bow.

> Thus, hiding in the clouds his daring head,
> Proud Athos ſeems old earth and heav'n to join.
> The fearful thunder he unſhaken views
> Deſcend, and daſh its fires againſt his feet:
> And thus the ſage, in learned calm repoſe,
> Envy and all her clam'rous wiles contemns,
> Hears not the terms opprobrious which ſhe vents,
> Heeds not th' envenom'd arrows which ſhe hurls,
> But to the world at large the monſter leaves
> For chaſtiſement, which he diſdains t' inflict.

The art of retorting abuſe for abuſe ſhould be confined to the market-place; and though the abuſe itſelf ſhould be truth, though it ſhould partake of the divine fire of poetry, ſtill it would ever remain abuſe. It may be very proper for thoſe who fight in mobs, with bludgeons; but very improper for ſuch as underſtand the true art of defence.

Your merit has elevated you ſo much above ſatire and envy that you certainly have no occaſion to repel their attacks; their malice is but temporary, and will ſink with them into everlaſting forgetfulneſs. Hiſtory, which has preſerved the memory of Ariſtides, has not con-

deſcended to mention the names of thoſe by whom he was envied; they are as little known as the perſecutors of Ovid. In a word, revenge is the paſſion of every offended man, but generoſity is only the paſſion of noble minds. Such is yours; and ſuch certainly was the paſſion that dictated the charming letter, which I cannot enough admire, addreſſed by you to your bookſellers.

I am delighted to ſee the world obliged to confeſs your philoſophy is as ſublime in practice as in ſpeculation. My applauſe will ever accompany that letter. Diſſipations of the city, certain terms unknown at Cirey, and at Remuſberg, ſuch as duty, reſpect, and court, which are inconvenient in practice, rob me of all my time. This you will no doubt perceive, for I had not enough to ſhorten my letter.

Let me beg you to aſſure the goddeſs who metamorphoſes Newton into Venus of my adoration; and if you meet a certain philoſophic poet, the author of the Henriade, and of the epiſtle to Urania, tell him no one can hold him in higher eſteem and conſideration than myſelf.

P. S. A propos, how proceeds Louis XIV.? —The word importunity will eſcape you— "That Apicius is never ſatiated with my "works."

LETTER LXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, December, 1738.

WE have juſt received an ink-ſtand which I, unworthy as I am, and madame du Chatelet, hoped to have had the honour of preſenting to your royal highneſs, as a new year's gift. The ambaſſador who, according to your pleaſant deſcription, is ſo often in danger of miſtaking you for a baſtion or a counterſcarp, will preſent you with a culverin or a mortar; but we thinking beings, in all humility, ſend our chief the inſtrument with which we communicate our thoughts. It is directed to Antwerp, for which it departs to-day, and from Antwerp is to go to Weſel, addreſſed to the baron de Borck; or, ſhould he be abſent, to the governor of the town; to be forwarded to your royal highneſs.

I am encouraged in taking this liberty becauſe that this trifling homage, ſent you by a ſubject, having been manufactured at Paris, imitates and ſurpaſſes the China lacker: it is a new art in Europe, and every art ſhould pay you

you tribute. Pardon, therefore, ſir, this exceſs of temerity.

I am, with the moſt tender gratitude, the moſt inviolable attachment and eſteem, and the moſt profound reſpect,

SIR,

Your royal highneſs's &c.

LETTER LXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, January 1, 1739.

HERO of mind ſublime, what can I ſay,
On this well wiſhing compliment'ry day?
Already are you good, and great, and wiſe!
Friendſhip and love your name immortalize!
But wiſh I muſt—Well, then, may thoſe who reign
O'er mortals, doom'd to want and pine in pain,
Make you their guide, tho' 'twere but now and then;
And recollect while monarchs they are men!
To human woes may you their minds recal!
Such is the new-year's wiſh I, greeting, ſend them all.

As I was continuing in the ſame ſtrain, the letter of your royal highneſs, and the epiſtle to the prince who has the good fortune to be your

brother, arrived, and the pen dropped from my hand.—Really, ſir, your leiſure is moſt ſingularly employed; and the very extraordinary talent, for a perſon not born in France, of writing poetry, and ſtill more extraordinary in a perſon of your rank, increaſes and ſtrengthens daily. But what is it that you omit to do? From the art of government to that of muſic and painting, which of the arts is it that you do not underſtand? Which of the gifts of nature has not your induſtry embelliſhed?

And is it then true, ſir, that your royal highneſs has a brother worthy of yourſelf?—This is very uncommon good fortune; and, if he were not wholly worthy he muſt become ſo, after having read the charming epiſtle of his elder brother. He is the firſt prince that ever received a ſimilar education.

I believe, ſir, one of the electors, your anceſtors, was ſurnamed the Cicero of Germany. Was it not John II.? Your royal highneſs is well perſuaded of my reſpect for this prince; but I am as well perſuaded that John II. did not write in proſe like Frederic; and, with reſpect to verſe, I defy all Germany, and almoſt all France, to write better than that beautiful epiſtle which begins—

O vous

O vous en qui mon cœur, tendre et plein de retour,
Chérit encor le ſang qui lui donna le jour! *

The word *encor* I think one of the niceſt efforts of art in the language. It intimates, with great energy, in two ſyllables, that the parents are a ſecond time beloved in the brother.

But let it pleaſe your royal highneſs no more to inſert a *g* in the word *opinion*; and deign to reſtore the word to four ſyllables, of which it conſiſts.—Such are the occaſions on which great princes and men of genius muſt bow before the pedant. The grandeur of your genius has no influence over ſyllables, nor have you the power to put a *g* where there is none.

Having mentioned ſyllables, let me further intreat your royal highneſs to ſpell the word *vice* with a *c* and not with *ſs*.

Pay but theſe trifling attentions, and you ſhall be one of the French academy whenever you pleaſe; and, your dignity apart, would do it great honour. Few of the academicians expreſs themſelves ſo forcibly as my prince, and the reaſon is he thinks more than they do. Your epiſtle really contains a picture of calumny worthy of Michael Angelo; and another of youth ſuch as Albano might have painted.

* Oh thou in whom my heart, tender and full of gratitude, cheriſhes anew the blood that gave it birth!

How much does your royal highneſs increaſe the deſire we have to pay our court to you! We have taken meaſures for our departure in the month of April, and it will be very unfortunate if I ſhould find no ſmall path, on the frontiers of Juliers, which ſhall conduct me to the feet of your royal highneſs. Permit me to inform you that we ſhall probably remain a year in thoſe parts, unleſs we ſhould be expelled by war. Madame du Chatelet intends to recover all the poſſeſſions of her family which are loaded with debts, and this will be a work of time. It will even be neceſſary to inſtitute a ſuit at Vienna, and at Bruſſels, which ſhe will purſue herſelf, and for which ſhe has already drawn out writings with preciſion and force equal to what are found in her work on fire. If theſe affairs ſhould continue in diſpute two years, it will not matter; Cirey muſt be forſaken for two years. Our duty and our ſerious buſineſs are and muſt be firſt conſiderations. And how can we regret Cirey when we ſhall be nearer Cleves, and a country which will probably be honoured with the preſence of your royal highneſs?

Perhaps, too, we ſhall intreat your royal highneſs to delay ſending the good wine which it is your generous intentions I ſhould drink. According to all appearance, I ſhall continue for ſome

ſome time to drink Rheniſh wine between Liege and Juliers. Your royal highneſs is too good; you have conſulted the phyſicians for me, and you have deigned to ſend me a preſcription which is ſuperior to all their recipes.

Seated beſide a tun of old Tokay,
As vig'rous as returning May,
At Fred'ric's court I'll baniſh all my care;
But note that Emily be there.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, admiration, and affection, in which you indulge me, &c.

LETTER LXXVI.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, Jan. 8, 1739 *.

I FLATTERED myſelf that the epiſtle on humanity might merit your approbation, becauſe of the ſentiments it contains; but I hoped, at the ſame time, that you would have been kind enough to criticiſe the poetry and the ſtyle. I, therefore, intreat the able phi-

* The Berlin edition dates January 10th.

loſopher and the great poet further to condeſcend to act the rigid grammarian, out of friendſhip for me. I ſhall not feel averſe to amend poetry the ſubject of which has pleaſed the marchioneſs; and by my docility in following your corrections you will judge of the pleaſure I find in amendment.

May my epiſtle on humanity be the harbinger of the work which you have projected! I ſhall think myſelf ſufficiently rewarded ſhould my epiſtle be the precurſor of yours. Purſue the ſame road, and do not think that any ill-placed ſelf-love will render me blind to the defects of my own productions. Humanity is an inexhauſtible ſubject. I have but ſtammered out my thoughts; from you they will flow with eaſe and preciſion.

It ſhould ſeem we ſtrengthen ourſelves in an opinion after having thought over all the reaſons by which it can be ſupported. I was thus determined to treat on the ſubject of humanity, which I hold to be the only virtue, and that it ought to be principally the attribute of thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by rank in the world. A ſovereign, great or ſmall, may be regarded as a man whoſe office it is to yield relief, as much as is in his power, to human miſery. He is like the phyſician who cures, not the diſeaſes of body,

body, but, the misfortunes of his ſubjects. The voice of the unfortunate, the groans of the wretched, the cries of the oppreſſed, ought to reach his ear; and, whether in pity to others or from a certain retroſpect to ſelf, it is neceſſary he ſhould be affected by the diſtreſs of thoſe whoſe affliction he himſelf is a witneſs of; and, if his heart contain but a ſmall portion of pity, the unhappy will find in him all that ſympathy of which they ſtand in need.

A prince is, relatively to his people, what the heart is relatively to the mechanical ſtructure of the body; it receives blood from all the members, and returns it back to the extremities. The prince receives the fidelity and obedience of his ſubjects; and he returns them abundance, proſperity, peace, and every thing which can contribute to the welfare and increaſe of ſociety.

Such are the maxims which I think muſt naturally take birth in the hearts of all men: but little reaſoning is neceſſary to make them felt, nor need we go through any long courſe of ethics for their acquirement. I think compaſſion, and the wiſh to relieve any one who has need of relief, are innate virtues in moſt men. We picture to ourſelves our own infirmities and wretchedneſs, when we view thoſe of others; and

and we are equally prompt to afford ſuccour as we ſhould be to aſk it ourſelves, were we in the ſame ſituation. Tyrants uſually ſin by conſidering things under a certain point of view; they only contemplate the world as they are affected by the world; and, becauſe they are ſuperior to certain vulgar diſtreſſes, their hearts are inſenſible of them. When they oppreſs their ſubjects, when they are ſevere, violent, and cruel, it is becauſe they are unacquainted with the ill they do; and becauſe, not having ſuffered, they think too lightly of pain. Such men by no means reſemble Mutius Scævola, who, while burning his hand in the preſence of Porſenna, felt all the force of the fire in that part of his body.

In a word, the whole human œconomy inſpires humanity. The general reſemblance which there is among men, their equality of condition, the indiſpenſable need which they have of each other, their miſeries, which ſtrengthen the ties that are formed by their wants, that natural inclination which each being feels for its likeneſs, ſelf preſervation which preaches humanity, in fine, all nature ſeems to unite to inculcate that as a duty in us which, conſtituting our happineſs, daily adds new ſweets to life.

This I think is quite ſufficient with reſpect to the

the morality of benevolence. I imagine I behold you yawn twice, as you read this verbose declamation, while the marchioness grows impatient. She really has reason so to do, for you know better than I every thing which can be said on the subject; and, what is more, you practise what you know.

We here feel all the effects of extreme frost; the cold is excessive. I never go into the air that I do not tremble lest some nitrous particle should extinguish in me the principle of heat. I request you would tell the marchioness that I earnestly entreat her to send me a little of that fire which renders her genius so splendid; she must have some to spare, and I am in great want. Should she be in need of ice, I promise to furnish her with a quantity sufficient to keep water frozen during all the heats of summer.

Doctissimus Jordanus * has not yet read the essay of the marchioness. I am not prodigal of your favours, and there are people who even accuse me of an excess of avarice. But Jordan shall read the essay on fire, since the marchioness consents; and he will tell you himself, if so it shall him please, what his feelings will be on

* The Berlin reads—*Doctissime, Je n'ai pas vu*, &c. *i. e. Oh most learned! I have not yet seen*, &c. But the prince had not only seen but sent his remarks. T.

reading

reading the work. All that I can previouſly aſſure you of is that we are none of us imbued with prejudice. Deſcartes, Leibnitz, Newton, and Emily, appear to us ſo many *great men*, who yield us information in the degree of the ages in which they lived.

The marchioneſs will have the advantage which the beauty of her ſex gives over ours, when eloquence is neceſſary.

With wit like hers 'tis eaſy to perſuade
That all is truth the godlike Newton ſaid;
But there's a truth which needs leſs art to prove,
The truth is this, that ſhe was form'd for love;
And that, beholding her, the boſom feels
More than the power of language e'er reveals.

Had the Graces been preſidents of the academy they would not have failed to have beſtowed the laurel with their own hands on the work. But it ſhould ſeem that the academicians, too much attached to old forms and cuſtoms, do not love novelty; the reaſon of which is the fear of being obliged to ſtudy ſubjects with which they are but imperfectly acquainted. I imagine to myſelf an old academician who, having grown grey in the harneſs of Deſcartes, beholds a new opinion ſtarted, when he is decrepid, and his cares almoſt ended. Such a man, having habitually learned the articles of philoſo-

philoſophic faith, is accuſtomed to his own manner of thinking; with this he is ſatisfied, and deſires that every body ſhould be the ſame. How! Become a diſciple at the age of fifty or ſixty, and be expoſed to the ſhame of ſtudying himſelf, after having ſo long taught others? From a huge flambeau, as he was, to be reduced to a ſmall ruſh light, or rather to ſee his light totally extinguiſhed! This is a kind of reaſoning he would not underſtand. It is more ſhort to decry a new ſyſtem than to examine it; and there is even heroic fortitude in oppoſing every kind of innovation, and in ſupporting ancient dogmas.

Another order of minds reaſon after another manner. They, in their ſimplicity, exclaim—Such was the opinion of our fathers; and why ſhould we think differently? Are we ſuperior to them? Were not they happy in following the ſyſtem of Ariſtotle, or of Deſcartes; and why ſhould we diſtract our brains with ſtudying the ſyſtems of upſtarts? Men of this kind always oppoſe the progreſs of knowledge; it therefore is not aſtoniſhing that the progreſs of knowledge is ſo ſlow.

As ſoon as I ſhall return to Remuſberg, I will plunge deep into philoſophy: I am indebted for this reſolution to the marchioneſs.

I am

I am likewiſe preparing another difficult and hazardous enterpriſe; but what it is you ſhall not know, till I have firſt tried my ſtrength. The king, to my misfortune, goes this ſpring into Pruſſia, whither I am to accompany him. It ſeems to be the will of fate that we ſhould play at croſs purpoſes, and, in deſpite of all I have been able to plan, I cannot yet foreſee when we ſhall meet; be it when it may, it will be too tardy for my wiſhes; of this I hope you are well convinced, and likewiſe of all the ſentiments with which I remain, &c.

LETTER LXXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January 20, 1739.

AMONG the Pagans, offerings were made to the Gods of the firſt fruits of the fields and orchards; among the people of Iſrael the firſt-born were conſecrated to the God of Jacob; and in the holy Roman church, not only firſt fruits and children but whole kingdoms are devoted to patron ſaints. Witneſs the abdication of Saint Louis, in favour of the Virgin Mary.

For my own part I have neither the firſt fruits of fields, of orchards, or of children, nor have I kingdoms to preſent; but I dedicate to you the firſt fruits of my poetry, of the year 1739. Were I a pagan, I ſhould invoke you by the name of Apollo; were I a Jew, you would perhaps be miſtaken for the royal prophet, and his ſon; or were I a papiſt, you might become my ſaint and confeſſor. But, being neither, I am ſatisfied with moſt philoſophically eſteeming you; with admiring you as a philoſopher, cheriſhing you as a poet, and reſpecting you as a friend.

I only wiſh you health, for you have need of nothing elſe. The inheritor of ſuperior genius, capable of equalling your own wiſhes, and of rendering yourſelf happy, and, in addition to this, the poſſeſſor of Emily, what could my wiſhes add to your felicity!

Recollect that under a zone ſomewhat more frigid than yours, in a country to which barbariſm lives neighbour, and in a ſolitary place retired from the world, a friend reſides who dedicates his vigils to you, and who never ceaſes offering up prayers for your welfare.

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LETTER LXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, January 18, 1739.

YOUR royal highneſs is more Frederic and more Marcus Aurelius than ever. Agreeable things drop from your pen with a facility which aſtoniſhes me. Your paſtoral letter is ſent by a moſt benevolent biſhop. You well prove that thoſe who are deſtined to be kings are really the Lord's anointed. Your catechiſm is always that of reaſon and happineſs. Fortunate is your flock, ſir; the fold at Cirey receives your words with great edification.

Your royal highneſs adviſes, that is to ſay commands, me to finiſh the age of Louis XIV. I ſhall obey, and even ſhall endeavour to enlighten it with that kind of circumſpection which ſhall not be to the detriment of truth, but which ſhall not render it odious. Neither is my great end that of political and military hiſtory; but rather of arts, commerce, laws, and in a word of the human mind. There is no dangerous truth in any of theſe; nor do I think I ought to bar up a road ſo ſpacious and

ſo

ſo ſafe becauſe there is a ſmall part of the way in which I may ſtumble. That part which is in the poſſeſſion of your royal highneſs will never be ſeen by any other perſon. The vulgar are not to be treated like my prince.

I have corrected the hiſtory of Charles XII. according to ſeveral documents which have been communicated to me by a ſervant of king Staniſlaus; but more eſpecially according to thoſe which your royal highneſs has deigned to ſend me. I have extracted nothing from the curious details with which you have honoured me, except what ought to be known by all, without offence to any; the population of countries, new laws, new eſtabliſhments, new cities, commerce, police, and public manners. But with reſpect to the individual acts of the czar, the czarina, and the czarowitz, I am profoundly ſilent. I name no perſon; I cite no perſon; not only becauſe it is no part of my ſubject, but becauſe I would not make uſe of a paſſage of the goſpel, if it had been cited by your royal highneſs to me, without your expreſs permiſſion. I am correcting the Henriade, and intend the firſt opportunity I have of ſending it, to ſubmit my alterations to the judgment of your royal highneſs. I am alſo correcting all my tragedies, and have written a new act to

Brutus; for it is neceſſary I ſhould correct myſelf, to be worthy of my prince and Emily.

I ſhall not print Merope, becauſe I am not yet ſatisfied with it; but I am requeſted to write a new tragedy; a tragedy all of love, and not of gallantry; a tragedy which may make the women weep, and be parodied at the Italian theatre. I am writing it, and have been this week paſt *. I ſhall be laughed at; but in the mean time I am conſiderably retouching the elements of Newton. It is my duty to neglect nothing, and I wiſh the work to be as complete and intelligible as poſſible.

I have ſent you, ſir, an exact account, of all the labours of your ſubject of Cirey; though really I ought not to forget the new perſecution I am ſuffering, from Rouſſeau and the abbé Desfontaines. While I am paſſing days and nights in ſolitude and the moſt aſſiduous labour, I am perſecuted at Paris, and calumniated and treated in a manner the moſt outrageouſly cruel.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet has imagined that Thiriot, who often ſends whatever is written againſt me to every body, may alſo have ſent your royal highneſs an intolerable libel, by the abbé Desfontaines. This ſhe has the more reaſon to believe becauſe ſhe has written a true

* Zulima.

ſtate

ſtate of the caſe to Thiriot, and he has returned no anſwer. The generous heart of madame du Chatelet, a heart worthy of yourſelf, has immediately taken fire: ſhe has written to your royal highneſs, and will let you underſtand her complaints from her own mouth; complaints which mine is forbidden to utter. The true ſtate alluded to is as follows:

The chevalier de Mouhy, who has before written againſt the abbé Desfontaines, wrote a ſmall literary pamphlet againſt him, and in this pamphlet he inſerted a letter which I wrote two years ago. In this letter, I cited a well-known fact; which was that the abbé Desfontaines, ſaved by me from fire, had, as a reward, immediately written a libel againſt his benefactor, and of this Thiriot was a witneſs. This is exactly conformable to truth, and exceedingly diſhonourable to letters.

Whether Thiriot on this occaſion dreads the new venom of the abbé Desfontaines, or whether he has more fear of this mad dog than he has love for his friend, are things of which I am ignorant. It is long ſince I have heard from him, and I pardon his not committing himſelf for me. I have written a ſhort apologetic memoir in anſwer to the abbé Desfontaines; madame du Chatelet has ſent it your

royal highneſs, and I have ſince greatly corrected it. I employ no abuſive terms. It is not againſt the abbé Desfontaines, it is only in my own defence; and I have endeavoured to interſperſe ſomewhat of literature, in order that the public may not be fatigued by perſonalities *.

But I perceive how much I muſt fatigue your royal highneſs by being thus prolix. What a ſubject for a great prince! Yet the gods ſometimes interfere in the follies of men; and heroes are ſpectators of the battle of the frogs.

I am, ſir, with the moſt profound reſpect, the tendereſt and moſt inviolable attachment, &c.

LETTER LXXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January 27, 1739.

WITH ſtrides terrific, and with brandiſh'd dart,
Death, griſly ſpectre, threat'ning onward came;
Pain was his guide, abhorrent, hideous fiend,
And groans, and writhes, and tortures, hell-born hags,

* This paper is found among Voltaire's literary miſcellanies, under the title of *Memoires ſur la Satire*.

Shrieking,

Shrieking, advanc'd to do his dire commands,
And gnaw, with wolfish teeth, the web of life.
Gasping Infirmity for Pity call'd,
Unceasing call'd, but call'd, alas, in vain!
Eternal Night threw back her ebon gates,
While I, propell'd, was hurried tow'rd the gulph!
None of his terrors did the shadowy king
Omit to marshal; all appear'd, and grinn'd,
And howl'd, and harrow'd up th'expiring soul!
Sinking I saw myself! The cords of life
Were torn by all that Fury could inflict.
The heart no longer labour'd with its load.
Vanish'd the world; extinct the light of day;
And Hope, which earliest childhood saw my friend
Unshaken, cruelly forsook my side!
In endless torments, and in mortal pangs,
I only wish'd the last remaining glow,
The poor, the single spark, should disappear;
That Death his rage insatiate might appease,
And call away his pestive dogs of hell!

Who was my champion? My deliv'rer, who?
Oh jocund Youth! With renovating life
Full to overflowing, bounteous thou didst pour
Thy vivifying spirit thro' my veins!
Thou radiant to the combat camest, nought fearing;
Thy beaming visage Death, grim goblin, saw;
Knew thy puissance, thine, his deadliest foe,
And from the conflict mutt'ring shrunk, abash'd.

Yes! Once again, belov'd Voltaire, I live:
Once more my heart to thee and friendship beats.
Me to those bow'rs of bliss rapt Fancy bears,
Where Emily and thou, on themes sublime,
Sit and converse; this vague earth rendering heav'n!

Oh bitter thought, that but renews my pangs!
Redouble all my tortures, mighty Gods!
Rack the retreating, tear the trembling nerves,
Ye who the thunder whirl: exhauſt your wrath;
Take back the ſoul you gave, I'll not repine,
Grant only, ere I die, my longing eyes
May view your wondrous work, your own Voltaire!

Theſe forty and odd verſes are to inform you that I have had a dreadful cramp in the ſtomach, which two days ſince was in danger of depriving you of a friend, who is as ſincerely attached to you as it is poſſible for man to be. My youth has ſaved me; the quacks ſay it was their remedies. For my own part, I believe it was my impatience to ſee you, before I die. I had the night before, at going to bed, read a very ill written ode by Rouſſeau, addreſſed to poſterity. This gave me the colic, and I am afraid leſt it ſhould give our poor deſcendants the plague: it is certainly the moſt miſerable work that ever fell into my hands.

I think myſelf exceedingly flattered, by your approbation of the laſt epiſtle which I ſent. You give me great pleaſure, by correcting my faults; and I will uſe every endeavour to correct my orthography, which is very bad; but I fear I ſhall not ſoon acquire all the preciſion which is requiſite. It is my defect to write too faſt, and to be too indolent to copy what I have written.

written. I promiſe you, however, to exert myſelf to the utmoſt; that you may have no reaſon to write a dialogue, in the ſtyle of Lucian, of letters pleading before the judgment ſeat of Vaugèlas, and complaining of the injuries I have done them.

If by ſelf-correction aptitude may be acquired, if application can teach to do better, and if the maſters of the art ſhall not grow weary of inſtructing their diſciples, I may then affirm that, with your aid, I ſhall one day write verſes leſs vile than thoſe which I ſcribble at preſent.

I imagine the marchioneſs du Chatelet was very ſeriouſly employed in experimental philoſophy, and in company. It is the property of the ſciences to impart a juſtneſs of underſtanding, which prevents its abuſe. I love to hear that a young lady has ſufficient power over her paſſions to ſacrifice all her inclinations to her duty; but I ſtill more admire a philoſopher who forſakes retreat, and tranquillity, in favour of friendſhip. Such are the examples with which Cirey ſhall furniſh poſterity, and which will do infinitely more honour to philoſophy than the abdication of that ſingular woman who deſcended from the throne of Sweden, to go and live in a palace, at Rome.

The ſciences ought to be conſidered as the

means by which we acquire the utmoſt capability, for the performance of our duties. Thoſe perſons by whom they are cultivated have moſt method in all they do, and act with moſt conſiſtency. The philoſophic ſpirit eſtabliſhes principles, which are the ſources of reaſoning, and the cauſe of congruity in action. I am not aſtoniſhed that you inhabitants of Cirey act as you ought to do; but I ſhould be very much aſtoniſhed were you not ſo to act; conſidering the depth of your knowledge, and the ſublimity of your genius.

I beg you to inform me of your departure for Bruſſels, and at the ſame time of what will be the ſhorteſt mode of expediting our correſpondence. I flatter myſelf I ſhall receive letters from you every week, when you ſhall be ſo near our frontiers. Perhaps I might be of ſome uſe to you in this country, for I am very particularly acquainted with the prince of Orange, who is often at Breda, and the duke of Aremberg who lives at Bruſſels. Perhaps alſo, by the intervention of the prince of Lichtenſtein, I could abridge the tedioufneſs of delay, which the marchioneſs might elſe ſuffer, at Bruſſels, and Vienna. The judges of theſe countries are in no haſte, in paſſing ſentence. It is ſaid that, if the imperial court owes any one a kick, he

muſt

muſt ſolicit three years before he can obtain payment. Hence I augur that the affairs of the marchioneſs will not be terminated ſo ſoon as ſhe herſelf might wiſh.

The Hungarian wine will follow you wherever you go; it is much more proper for you than Rheniſh, which I intreat you not to drink, becauſe of its unwholeſomeneſs.

Do not forget me, dear Voltaire; and whenever your health will permit, let me hear news of yourſelf, your critical remarks, and your works. You have ſo accuſtomed me to your productions that I ſcarcely can be ſatisfied with the writings of others. I burn with impatience to ſee the end of the age of Louis XIV. The work is incomparable, but beware of committing it to the preſs.

LETTER LXXX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, Feb. 3, 1739 *.

YOU receive my works with too much indulgence: your prejudice, in favour of their

* February the 2d, in the Berlin edition.

author,

author, occaſions you to overlook their weak parts, and the errors with which they abound. I am the Prometheus of the fable; I ſteal ſome part of your divine fire, with which I animate my feeble productions. But the difference between the ancient fable and the preſent truth is that the ſoul of Voltaire, much more grand and magnanimous than that of the ſovereign of the Gods, does not condemn me to the puniſhment which was endured, by the author of the celeſtial theft.

My not yet re-eſtabliſhed health prevents me from writing certain works which I have meditated; and the phyſician, more cruel even than the diſeaſe, daily condemns me to take exerciſe; which time is ſubtracted from the hours devoted to ſtudy. The empirics wiſh to forbid me the acquirement of knowledge; they will ſoon not ſuffer me to think. But, after an exact ſtatement of debtor and creditor, I would rather have a ſickly body than a ſickly mind. Unfortunately, the mind only ſeems to be an acceſſory of the body. Whenever the organization of our machine is out of order, ſo is the mind; nor can matter ſuffer without mind participating in its ſufferings. This ſtrict union, this intimate connection, ſeems to me a very ſtrong proof, in favour of the opinion of Locke. That which thinks in usis certainly an effect,

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or a reſult, of the mechaniſm of our animated machine. Every man of ſenſe, every man who has not imbibed either prejudice or ſelf-love, muſt acknowledge this truth.

In order to give you an account of my occupations, I muſt inform you that I have made ſome progreſs in phyſics. I have ſeen all the experiments of the air pump, and have indicated two new experiments. The firſt is, to put an open watch in the pump, to know whether its motion would be accelerated, retarded, unaffected, or whether it would ſtop. The ſecond relates to the productive virtue of the air. A portion of earth is to be taken, in which a pea is to be planted. This is to be encloſed in the recipient, from which the air is to be pumped; and I imagine the pea will not grow; which I attribute to the productive virtue of the air, and that power which developes ſeed.

I have further propoſed a queſtion to our academicians. An idea has ſtruck me concerning the cauſe of winds, which I have communicated to them, and our celebrated Kirch will be able to inform me, at the end of a year, whether my aſſertion be well founded, or whether I am deceived. I will briefly ſtate the queſtion.

The momentum of the wind can only proceed from two cauſes; the preſſure and the

motion of the air. The reaſon that we have more ſtorms toward the winter ſolſtice, I affirm, is that the ſun is nearer the earth, and that its preſſure upon our hemiſphere produces high winds: and, further, the earth being in its perihelion, muſt have a ſtronger motion according to the inverſe ratio of the ſquare of its diſtance; which motion, having an influence on the parts of the air, muſt neceſſarily be productive of winds, and tempeſts.

The other winds may originate in the other planets, with which we ſhall be in the perigæum. Beſide that, when the ſun attracts much humidity from the earth, theſe vapours, which ariſe and are collected in the middle region of the air, may in like manner occaſion, by their preſſure, winds and whirlwinds. Mr. Kirch will exactly obſerve the ſituation of our earth, relative to the planetary ſyſtem; will remark the clouds, and carefully examine, that he may find whether I have aſſigned the true cauſe of high winds.

Enough of phyſics. With reſpect to poetry, I had formed a plan, but of ſo extenſive a nature that, when I coolly conſider, it terrifies me. Would you believe that I have projected a tragedy? The ſubject is taken from the Æneid. The action is to repreſent the tender and con-

ſtant friendſhip of Niſus and Euryalus. I propoſe to myſelf to end my ſubject in three acts; and I had arranged and digeſted the materials, when I was taken ill: ſince when Niſus and Euryalus have appeared to me more formidable than ever.

For your own part, my dear friend, you are to me an incomprehenſible being. I doubt whether there be ſuch a perſon as Voltaire in the world! I have formed a ſyſtem, to deny his exiſtence. It certainly cannot be one man, who performs the prodigious labours which are attributed to M. de Voltaire. There is an academy, at Cirey, compoſed of men ſelected from the whole earth; among whom there are philoſophers, who tranſlate Newton; heroic poets; writers of tragedy; ſome that equal Catullus; others Thucydides; and the works of this academy are publiſhed under the name of Voltaire: like as the acts of a whole army are attributed to the chief, by whom it is commanded. Fable tells us of a giant with a hundred arms; you have a thouſand minds. You wiſh to encircle the globe which Atlas bears. The prodigious ſeverity of your labours, I own, incites my fears. Do not forget that, though your genius be immenſe, your body is exceedingly frail. Let me entreat you to pay ſome

reſpect

reſpect to the feelings of your friends, and do not render your land barren by a forced tillage. The vivacity of your mind injures your health, and your extraordinary induſtry preys upon your life.

Since you promiſe to ſend me the paſſages of the Henriade, which you have corrected, let me requeſt you to add your criticiſms on thoſe which you have expunged. I am inclined to have the Henriade engraved, when you ſhall have ſent me the alterations which you have thought proper to make, like the edition of Horace, that has been engraved at London. Knobelſdorf, who draws very well, will make deſigns for the plates; and the ode to Maupertuis may be added, together with the moral epiſtles, and other of your pieces, which are diſperſed in various publications. Let me beg you would tell me your opinion, and what is your wiſh.

It is diſgraceful, it is ſhameful to France, that you ſhould be perſecuted with impunity. It is the duty of the maſters of the earth to adminiſter juſtice, and to recompenſe and ſupport virtue againſt oppreſſion, and the calumnies of vice. My indignation is incited to think no perſon undertakes to oppoſe the fury of your enemies. The whole nation ought to take part,

part, in the quarrel of him who labours only for the fame of his country; and who is almoſt the only man who does honour to his age. Perſons who think juſtly deſpiſe the defamatory libel which has appeared, and hold the abominable authors of it in horror. But ſuch writings cannot injure your reputation: they are barbleſs arrows; ſlander too atrocious to be eaſily believed.

I have written to Thiriot whatever it is neceſſary he ſhould know, and the advice which has been ſent him, relative to his conduct, he, I hope, will profit by. You know that I and the marchioneſs are your beſt friends; commit therefore, your defence to us, whenever you are attacked. Not that we could acquit ourſelves with equal eloquence, wit, and dignity, as you could yourſelf: but whatever we ſay will come with greater force; becauſe a friend, angered at the wrong a friend has received, may ſay many things which the moderation of the perſon offended ought to ſuppreſs. The public itſelf is ſooner moved, by the complaints of a compaſſionate friend than of an injured man, who calls for vengeance. I am not indifferent to any thing which affects you; and I zealouſly intereſt myſelf in the felicity of him who applies

himſelf

himſelf inceſſantly to afford me pleaſure, and inſtruction.

LETTER LXXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, February 15, 1739.

I HAVE received your new-year's gift. I ſent one, like a ſubject, to your royal highneſs; a return to which you have made, like a monarch. Your undated letter; your charming verſes,

Quelque demon malicieux
Se joue, aſſurément, du monde; etc. *

have diſſipated the clouds which obſcured the ſerene firmament of Cirey. Vexation comes from Paris, and conſolation from Remuſberg. In the name of our maſter, Apollo, deign to inform me, ſir, how you have acquired ſo perfect a knowledge of conditions of life which ſeem ſo very diſtant from your ſphere of action. By the aid of what microſcope has the heir of a great monarchy been able to diſtinguiſh all

* Some malicious demon aſſuredly ſports with the world; &c.

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the ſhades which checker common life? Theſe are ſubjects with which princes are totally unacquainted; but you are a man, as well as a prince.

The abbé Alari aſked permiſſion of our king, one day, to go into the country for a ſhort time, and to depart immediately. What, ſaid the king; is your coach and ſix ready at the door? The king imagined that every man had a coach and ſix at leaſt.

You induce me to believe in the metempſychoſis, ſir; your ſoul muſt have long inhabited the body of ſome amiable private perſon; a Rochefoucault, or a La Bruyere. What a picture of the rich, overburdened by their inſipid happineſs; and of the quarrels and afflictions that trouble thoſe marriages which, in appearance, are moſt fortunate! What a crowd of ideas and images! Apply but a ſmall farthing file and how perfect will be the workmanſhip of your ſterling ore! You create; I do but correct. And this is the reaſon why I dare not yet ſend your royal highneſs my new tragedy; but I take the liberty to preſent a ſhort extract, which I have lately retouched, from the Henriade.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet has juſt received a letter from your royal highneſs, which af-

fords good proof that Remuſberg is ſoon to become an academy of ſciences. I muſt be highly enamoured of truth indeed to allow that Emily may be deceived; yet truth is more potent even than kings; nay, even than Emily.

I think you are very right, ſir, concerning the fire excited by a weſt wind. Had men waited till Boreas ſhould warm them, they would have been in great danger of periſhing with cold. The higheſt winds, by paſſing through the branches of trees, loſe much of their force. Should theſe branches be dry, they would fall: ſhould they be green, friction to eternity would never produce a ſpark. It is much more probable that thunder, rather than wind, ſhould have occaſioned the conflagration of foreſts, and the various volcanoes, with which the earth abounds, were our firſt furnaces *.

The memoir, in other reſpects, is full of curious reſearches, and thoughts equally bold and philoſophic. It is the ſyſtem of Boerhaave, of Muſſchenbroeck, and often that of Nature. Our academy has given a prize to one man for having ſaid that fire is compoſed of bubbles †; and

* See Letter VIII. from the Prince Royal to the marchioneſs du Chatelet. T.

† To Euler——The prize however was not given, by the academy,

and to another for affirming it is a cylindrical machine. Such is the taſte of our nation. He who borders on romance will be preferred to the perſon who ſtudies nature. For this reaſon, I will not have Merope acted; but I am preparing a very romantic tragedy. When we are in the land of Harlequin, we muſt wear a Harlequin's jacket, and a black maſk.

Me ſi fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auſpiciis, et ſponte meâ componere curas!

Did I live under the government of my prince, I would compoſe no ſuch works; but endeavour to conform to his maſculine and vigorous manner of thinking. I would kindle my expiring fire by the ſparks of his genius. But what can I do in France, ill and perſecuted as I am, and ever diſturbed by the dread that envy and perſecution will at length be my deſtruction? The deſert in which I have taken refuge, in company with Minerva, who, under the figure of madame du Chatelet, is become my patroneſs, this deſert, which ſhould be inacceſſible to perſecutors, has not prevented their fury from coming thither, in ſearch of a lan-

academy, for this hypotheſis of bubbles; but for a very excellent formula, for the propagation of ſound.

guiſhing hermit, who only exiſts for your royal highneſs, Emily, and ſtudy.

I am with the moſt profound reſpect, moſt tender attachment, &c.

LETTER LXXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, February 26, 1739.

I.

OH fearful tidings! woe of woes!
The hero whom all hearts adore,
The hope and idol of the world,
Perhaps, oh grief! is now no more!

II.

Some envious Fiend, on miſchief bent,
Would nip the beauteous roſe in bloom.
Some haggard Fury, hating man,
Opens and points toward the tomb.

III.

God of the healing art, deſcend!
Ye Muſes, leave your heav'nly ſphere!
Oh haſte, ye Virtues, haſte, and aid
The prince in whom we you revere!

IV.

Deſcend and cloſe the gaping grave;
Let him not fall a ſacrifice!

In him ye ſplendid live and reign;
With him your hope, your glory dies.

V.

Ev'n at the flaming mount of God,
In bitter grief, Earth loudly cried—
" Sap my foundations, or reſtore
" My hope, my bleſſing, and my pride!

VI.

" Thou know'ſt, Oh God! that, languid, weak,
" With many a crime my boſom ſtain'd,
" Since this high boon thou haſt beſtow'd,
" Of ills I've never once complain'd."

VII.

Heav'n kindly heard the prayer of Earth;
The Loves and Graces hither ſped;
Pallas and bleſt Hygeia ſmil'd,
And Death and all his Demons fled!

VIII.

Rival of all the mighty dead!
Heroic heart of mould divine!
If yet I form a wiſh to live,
It is to think that heart is mine!

IX.

Born to misfortune, I'm the ſport
Of hateful Envy, fooliſh Zeal;
Nor, during my poor dregs of life,
Can e'er the wounds they gave me heal.

X.

But, what though friends ungrateful prove,
Or cowards faulter, I forgive;
Heav'n has large recompenſe in ſtore,
And this I aſk—Let Frederic live!

You muſt excuſe theſe ſpiritleſs verſes, ſir, which the heart dictated at the moment of that fear in which I ſtill remain, from the recollection of your danger, and from the joy which I at the ſame moment felt, when, by your own hand, I was informed of your reſurrection.

Your royal highneſs then reſembles the ſwan of yore, which ſung dying! How exquiſite, ſir, was the conſolation I received, from your verſes! The ſtamina of life muſt be great indeed in a man who could write thus, immediately after a diſeaſe like that of the cramp in the ſtomach! And how profuſe, ſir, are your favours! I have no protectors, but you and Emily; and your royal highneſs not only deigns to love me, but is deſirous that others ſhould likewiſe love me. What are others to me? I ſhall not have the unfortunate weakneſs to ſeek applauſe from Vadius, when I am honoured by the bounties of Frederic. But, the miſchief is, the implacable hatred of Vadius is often followed by the perſecution of Sejanus.

I remain in France becauſe madame du Chatelet is there; otherwiſe a more profound retreat ſhould long ſince have concealed me, from perſecution and envy. I do not hate my country: I reſpect and love the government under which I was born. My only wiſh is to be able

to purſue my ſtudies, with more tranquillity and leſs fear.

Did the abbé Desfontaines, and thoſe of his ſtamp, who perſecute me, remain ſatisfied with defamatory libels, theſe might be endured: but there is no engine which they do not ſet in motion to procure my ruin. They ſometimes circulate ſcandalous writings, which they impute to me; at others, anonymous letters to miniſters; tales forged at will by Rouſſeau, and commented upon by Desfontaines. Bigots join the party, and, with the zealous ſemblance of religion, maſk the fury with which they ſeek to injure me. I am daily in dread of loſing my liberty, or my life; and, languid, as I am, in ſolitude, and unable to defend myſelf, I am abandoned by thoſe very perſons to whom I have done moſt good, and who think it their intereſt to betray me. Some corner, in Holland, England, Swiſſerland, or elſewhere, might ſhelter me from the ſtorm; but a moſt reſpectable lady has deigned to attach her happy life to my unfortunate exiſtence. She ſoftens every chagrin I feel, though ſhe has not been able to calm my fears.

While I could, I concealed from your royal highneſs my afflicting ſituation; notwithſtanding the goodneſs with which you yourſelf

have deigned to bewail it: I wiſhed to ſpare your generous mind ſuch diſagreeable reflections. I thought only of the ſciences, in which you delight; I forgot the author, whom you have deigned to love. But longer to have kept ſecret the ſtate in which I am would have been to have betrayed my protector. I have deſcribed it as it is. Horace ſays—

Durum, ſed levius fit patientiâ;

and I ſay—

Durum, ſed levius fit per Fredericum.

Your royal highneſs alſo has promiſed your protection, in behalf of the affairs which madame du Chatelet has to diſcuſs, on the confines of your territories. She thanks you, ſir; and ſhe alone is able to thank you properly, for ſuch benefits. Is it poſſible that your royal highneſs ſhould be in Pruſſia, when we ſhall be near Cleves? I hope, at leaſt, that we ſhall be there long enough at length to ſee *ſalutare meum*.

I am, with profound reſpect, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, February 28, 1739.

I RECEIVED the letter of your royal highneſs, dated February the 23d, and ſent my anſwer by the ſame way. We immediately tried the experiment of the watch in the recipient. The privation of air did not affect its motion, which depends on the ſpring. The watch is now under the bell; and I think I perceive the balance may perhaps go a little faſter, being more free in vacuum; but the increaſe of motion is very ſmall, and probably depends on the nature of the watch. It is evident, from the experiment, that the air has no effect on the ſpring: and, with reſpect to the ſubtile matter of Deſcartes, I am his very humble ſervant! If this matter, this torrent of vortexes, proceed in one direction, how can the ſprings compoſed of them operate in every direction? Nay, indeed, what are theſe vortexes?

But what are machines, or air pumps to me? I am moſt intereſted, ſir, in your machine; in the health of that amiable body which is the abode of ſo beautiful a mind. And am I, at

laſt,

laſt, obliged to ſay to your royal highneſs what you have ſo often ſaid to me? Be careful of yourſelf: be leſs ſevere in your labours. This you ſay, ſir, to a man whoſe preſervation is uſeleſs to the world; and I repeat it to one on whom the happineſs of mankind depends. Can it be poſſible, ſir, that your accident has been attended by ſuch effects?

I have done myſelf the honour to write to M. Plœtz. I have alſo directed immediately to yourſelf. Alas! I cannot be of the number of thoſe who wait around your perſon. Niſus and Euryalus would perhaps be more amuſing to you, in your convaleſcence, than ſubjects of calculation. I am not aſtoniſhed that the hero of friendſhip ſhould chooſe ſuch a theme. I impatiently expect the firſt ſcenes. Scipio, Cæſar, Auguſtus, wrote tragedies; *cur non Fredericus?*

Your royal highneſs does me too much honour: you oppoſe my misfortunes with too many bounties. I have made ſo many alterations, in the Henriade, that I ſhall be obliged to ſend you the work entire, with the corrections. If you will give me your commands, concerning the mode in which it may be conveyed, they ſhall be executed. I am too happy, in deſpite of my enemies. I return you a

thouſand

thouſand thanks: my heart is affected by all you have deigned to ſay! How much ſhould I prattle, if the deplorable ſtate of my health would permit me to write more! Behold me at your feet, ſir; the little breath I have is all for Emily, and my tutelary deity.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the tendereſt gratitude, &c.

LETTER LXXXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remuſberg,
March 8, 1739 *.

SINCE the laſt letter I wrote to you, my health has been ſo indifferent that I have not been able to work at any thing whatever. Idleneſs is to me much more inſupportable than labour and diſeaſe. But we are formed of a morſel of clay; and it would be ſupremely ridiculous in us to expect a great degree of health, from a machine which naturally muſt be often out of order, and which is obliged to wear itſelf away, finally to periſh.

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

I ſee,

I ſee, by your letter, you are in a good train to correct your works. I greatly regret that ſome grains of this ſage criticiſm have not alighted upon the piece which I have ſent to you. I ſhould not have expoſed it to the ſun, but with an intent that it ſhould be purified. I do not expect praiſes from Cirey; they are not my due: but I expect hints, and ſage advice; theſe you certainly owe me, and I beg you would pay no regard to my ſelf-love.

I have read the extract from the Henriade, which you have corrected, with infinite pleaſure. It is beautiful! Sublime! I notwithſtanding wiſh I had written that which you have expunged. I imagine it is my fate to feel, more ſtrongly than others, the beauties with which you adorn your works. The fine verſes which I have juſt read have again animated me, with the ſacred fire of Apollo. Such is the power of your genius, that it is ſympathetic at the diſtance of more than two hundred leagues. I will again ſtring my lute, to produce new harmony.

There is no doubt of your ſucceſs, in the new tragedy you are writing. When you ſpeak of fame, we imagine we liſten to Julius Cæſar: when you diſcourſe of humanity, nature ſeems delivering her own dictates; and, if love be the ſubject, we imagine we hear the tender Anacreon,

or

or the divine ſongſter who ſighed for Leſbia. In a word, you want nothing but that tranquillity of mind which, with all my heart, I wiſh you enjoyed, to ſucceed and produce miracles of every kind.

It is not aſtoniſhing that the Royal Academy ſhould have preferred ſome bad philoſophical works, to the excellent eſſay of the marchioneſs. How many are the impertinencies uttered by philoſophy! How various are the abſurdities of the human mind, in the ſchools! What paradox was ever broached, which has not found ſupporters? Men have always been addicted to the falſe. I know not by what caprice it ſhould happen that truth ſhould continually appear to them the leaſt ſtriking. Prejudice, vanity, and a ſuperficial mind, will, I believe, in all ages, be enemies to the progreſs of ſcience: and it is very natural that the literati, by profeſſion, ſhould find a difficulty in receiving laws from a young and lovely lady; whom they all acknowledge the object of their admiration, in the kingdom of the Graces; but whom they refuſe to acknowledge, as an example for ſtudy, in the land of ſcience.

You render a truly philoſophic homage to truth. Thoſe intereſts, thoſe reaſons, ſmall or great, thoſe thick clouds which uſually darken

the vulgar eye, have no influence over you; and truths approach as much nearer your intelligence as the ſtars, which are viewed through a teleſcope, become more clearly manifeſt to the ſight. It were to be wiſhed that men were all ſuperior to corruption, error and deceit; and that truth and good taſte ſhould ſerve as general rules, in ſerious compoſitions, and works of wit: but how few of the learned are capable of ſacrificing the prejudices of eſteem, the power of beauty, and the force of friendſhip, to truth! A vigorous mind is neceſſary, to vanquiſh opponents ſo puiſſant: and the triumph which, on ſuch an occaſion, is gained, over friendſhip, is greater than that gained over ſelf. The winds are, as you allow, properly confined in the cave of Æolus, from which, before we take them, I imagine we ought to ſhew cauſe.

I have been greatly affected by the perſecutions which you endure: they reſemble ſtorms, that for a time deprive the ocean of its calm; and I ardently wiſh I were the Neptune of the Æneid, that I might procure you that tranquillity which I ſo ſincerely wiſh you to enjoy. Permit me to recal to your memory thoſe two fine lines, in your epiſtle to Emily, in which you have given yourſelf ſo excellent a leſſon:

Tranquille

Tranquille au haut des cieux, que Newton s'eſt ſoumis,
Il ignore, en effet, s'il a des ennemis *.

Take my advice, and leave that contemptible crowd of abject foes, as furious as they are impotent, to crawl beneath you. Your merit and your fame will be your ægis. Envy will in vain purſue you; her darts will be blunted and broken, when hurled againſt the author of the Henriade; in a word, againſt Voltaire. Let me add, if the intention of your enemies be to injure, you have no reaſon to fear them, for this they never can do; and, if they only ſeek to torment you, which is moſt apparent, you would be very ill adviſed to give them that ſatisfaction. Conſcious of your merit, and clothed in your virtue, you ought to enjoy that mild and happy peace which is the moſt deſirable thing on earth. Let me entreat you to form ſuch a reſolution! I am intereſted in it; both from friendſhip and from the part which I take in your health, and exiſtence.

Pray inform me which way, or by whom, I may ſend you what I have ſet apart, for yourſelf and the marchioneſs: all is ready and packed up. Act openly, and tell me, as I wiſh, what you find moſt expedient.

* Tranquilly ſeated, in the heavens he has ſubjugated, Newton knows not that he has enemies.

The

The marchioneſs aſks whether I have received the extracts from Newton, which ſhe has made, and I forgot to anſwer her queſtion: but I beg you to tell her that Thiriot ſent it, and that it charmed me; as every thing does which comes from her. In reality, the marchioneſs is ſo exigent, ſhe wiſhes to rob us men of all the advantageous privileges of our ſex; and I fear, if ſhe ſhould undertake to command armies, ſhe would put the aſhes of Condé and Turenne to ſhame. Oppoſe a progreſs which gives us ſuch a proſpect of futurity, and take care at leaſt that ſome kind of glory ſhall remain ours.

I am full of projects. If I acquire but a partial return of health, you will be inundated, at Cirey, by my works; like as Italy was overrun by the invaſion of the Goths. Let me entreat you to act always as my judge, and not as my panegyriſt.

LETTER LXXXV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remuſberg,
March 22, 1739.

I WAS in furious haſte to diſcover my philoſophical projects. It muſt be owned, it was very much the act of a young man, to dare

to

to propoſe problems to maſters in the art, after having acquired a ſlight knowledge of phyſics. I bluſh, make honourable amends, and promiſe you ſhall no more hear me ſpeak of perihelion nor aphelion, till I have previouſly gained information.

Forgive my ignorance, however, when I object to the vacuum which you ſuppoſe between the ſun and earth. It ſeems to me that, in what he has written on light, Newton ſays the rays of the ſun are material, and that therefore a vacuum is neceſſary, in order that theſe rays may arrive in ſo ſhort a time. But, if theſe rays be material and occupy a ſpace ſo immenſe, the whole interval will then be full of luminous matter; conſequently, there is no vacuum; and the ſubtile matter of Deſcartes, or the æther, as it ſhall pleaſe you to call it, is replaced by your light. What then becomes of the vacuum? After this, do not expect a ſingle word more from me, on phyſics.

I am a volunteer in philoſophy. I am well perſuaded we never ſhall penetrate into the ſecrets of nature; and, remaining neuter between all ſects, I can look on without prejudice, and amuſe myſelf at their expence.

I am not equally indifferent to what concerns morality: this is the moſt neceſſary branch of

philoſophy, and that which contributes moſt to the happineſs of mankind.

Let me beg you to correct the piece I ſend you on tranquillity. My health has not permitted me to do much; but, in the mean time, I have given this ſketch. They are crude ideas, which the hand of an able painter ſhould bring to perfection. I wait my returning powers, to begin my tragedy. I will exert myſelf to ſucceed, but I am convinced that the piece, when finiſhed, will be good for nothing, except to paper the hair of the marchioneſs.

I am meditating a work on Machiavel's prince. Theſe various ſubjects are revolving in my mind; and the aid of ſome deity is neceſſary, to reduce the chaos to order. I impatiently expect the Henriade, but I earneſtly deſire you to ſend me the criticiſm of the paſſages you retrench. Nothing can be more inſtructive, nothing more capable of forming the taſte, than theſe remarks.

Pleaſe to ſend your letters by the way of Michelet, which is the beſt. Inform me of the ſtate of your health, I beg; for I am very apprehenſive that the perſecutions, and continual affairs you have on hand, ſhould render it worſe than it is.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVI.

From the Prince Royal.

Remuſberg, April 15, 1739.

I WAS very ſenſibly affected by the moving recital, which you have given me, of your deplorable ſituation. A friend, at ſome hundreds of leagues diſtance, apparently, can be but of little utility; yet I mean to make an attempt in your favour, which I hope may in ſome manner be beneficial. Alas, dear Voltaire, why cannot I offer you an aſylum, where moſt aſſuredly you ſhould ſuffer nothing ſimilar to thoſe vexations which are heaped upon you, by your ungrateful country! You would here find neither calumniators, ungrateful, nor envious perſons; but men capable of doing juſtice to your merit, and of diſtinguiſhing that which Nature, above all her works, has ſo highly diſtinguiſhed.

Would I were able to alleviate your afflictions! I can aſſure you, I meditate the means of ſerving you efficaciouſly. Conſole yourſelf as well as you can, my dear friend, and remember that, to maintain an equality of conditions among men, misfortunes were neceſſary, in

order to balance the advantages you enjoy, of genius, and the friendſhip of the marchioneſs.

On occaſions like theſe, it is neceſſary to obtain that aid from philoſophy which may moderate the firſt tranſports of grief, and calm the impetuous emotions which chagrin excites in the ſoul. I know that advice coſts nothing; and that the practice of it is almoſt impoſſible. I know, too, that the ſtrength of your own mind is ſufficient to oppoſe every calamity. Still, however, the ſympathy of friendſhip may impart conſolation and fortitude.

Your adverſaries are, indeed, people ſo contemptible that you certainly ſhould not fear their power to injure your reputation. The teeth of envy are blunted, whenever ſhe attempts to bite you. We need but read the calumnies which are diſperſed, concerning you, without partiality, and we ſhall diſcover their malice, and infamy. Remain at peace, my dear Voltaire, and wait till you can taſte the fruits of my endeavours.

I hope the air of Flanders will occaſion you to forget your ſufferings; like as the waters of Lethe efface all recollection of pain, among the dead.

I expect to hear from you, to know when it will be agreeable to the marchioneſs that I ſhould ſend her a letter, for the duke d'Aremberg.

My

My Hungarian wine and amber languiſh to depart. I ſhall ſend the whole to Bruſſels, when I hear you are ſafely arrived.

Have the goodneſs to addreſs the letters which you write to me, from Cirey, by way of the trader Michelet, which will be the ſhorteſt. But, if you write to me from Bruſſels, let it be under the addreſs of general Borck, at Weſel. You will wonder that I ſhould have been ſo long without anſwering you; but you will eaſily unravel the myſtery, when you know that a fortnight's abſence prevented me from receiving your letter, which lay waiting here for me.

I entreat you would never doubt of the ſentiments of friendſhip and eſteem with which I am, &c.

LETTER LXXXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, April 15, 1739.

DURING the ſlumbers of Niſus and Euryalus, your royal highneſs nobly tries your ſtrength in worthy amuſements. Your French ſtyle is arrived at ſo great a degree of preciſion,

and elegance, that I imagine you were born in the Verſailles of Louis XIV, that Boſſuet and Fenelon were your tutors, and Madame de Sevigné your nurſe.

If however you wiſh to ſubject yourſelf to our miſerable rules of verſification, I ſhall do myſelf the honour to inform your royal highneſs that our timid writers avoid as much as poſſible the uſe of the word *croient* in poetry; becauſe, if it be pronounced as two ſyllables, the reſult will be the pronunciation is not French, but the ſound will reſemble *croyint*; and, if pronounced as one ſyllable, it is too long. Thus, inſtead of ſaying

Ils croient reformer, ſtupides téméraires, &c.

the Apollos of Remuſberg may with the ſame eaſe ſay,

Ils penſent réformer, ſtupides téméraires. *

But I am infinitely charmed continually to perceive, ſir, in your moſt trifling amuſements, an inexhauſtible fund of philoſophy.

With reſpect to that other more uncertain branch of philoſophy, which we call phyſics, it will no doubt enter into your ſanctuary. Your very objections already afford inſtruction.

* Raſhly ſtupid, they think to reform, &c.

Rays

Rays of light muſt certainly be material, becauſe they may be divided: they heat, they burn, they go and come; and becauſe they were able to give impulſe to a watch ſpring, placed near the focus of the glaſs of the prince of Heſſe. But whether it be a ſubſtance preciſely ſuch as that concerning which we have obtained three or four ideas, and whether its properties are the ſame, this is a ſubject concerning which we have, hitherto, obtained nothing better than probable conjectures.

As to the ſpace which is filled by the rays of the ſun, theſe rays are ſo far from forming an abſolute plenum, in the road they travel, that the matter which is emitted by the ſun, in a year, perhaps does not conſiſt of two cubic feet, and perhaps does not weigh two ounces.

The fact is that Rœmer has well demonſtrated, in deſpite of Maraldi, that light travels from the ſun to the earth in ſeven minutes and a half: and, on the other hand, Newton has proved that a body, which moves in a fluid of the ſame denſity as itſelf, loſes the half of its motion, after having traverſed thrice its diameter, and is ſoon totally deprived of motion. The reſult of this is that light, did it penetrate a fluid more denſe than itſelf, would loſe its motion much more quickly, and would never arrive at the

earth; conſequently, it travels through the moſt abſolute ſpace.

Bradley has further diſcovered that the light which comes from Sirius, to the earth, is not more retarded, in its courſe, than that of the ſun. If this will not prove a vacuum, I know not what will.

Your idea, ſir, of refuting Machiavel is much more worthy of a prince, ſuch as you, than that of refuting mere philoſophers. The knowledge of man, and his duties, form your chief ſtudy. It is for a prince like you to inſtruct princes; and I will be bold enough moſt earneſtly to entreat your royal highneſs to adhere to, and execute, this noble plan.

Your continued goodneſs, ſir, to the Henriade originates, no doubt, in the ideas which you have there found, that are ſo oppoſite to the principles of Machiavel. You have deigned to love an author who is equally the enemy of tyranny and rebellion. Your royal highneſs is good enough to command me to ſend you an account of the alterations I have made, and I obey.

The firſt conſiderable change is that of the combat between *d'Ailly* and his ſon. It ſeemed to me that this incident, affecting in itſelf, was not of ſufficient extent; and that the paſſions would

would not be moved by a ſlight mention of the ſubject. I endeavour to follow the excellent example which Virgil affords, in Niſus and Euryalus. If I am not miſtaken, it is neceſſary that characters ſhould appear long enough before the ſpectator for him to feel ſome attachment to them. I delight in rapid images, but I alſo delight occaſionally to dwell on pathetic circumſtances.

The ſecond moſt important change is in the tenth book. The combat between Turenne and d'Aumale ſeemed too haſty. I had avoided the great difficulty, which conſiſts in depicting circumſtances; and I have now wreſtled with this difficulty. The verſes begin as follow:

"O Dieu! cria Turenne, arbitre de mon roi," &c.

I believe, ſir, I am the firſt poet who has made a ſimile on the refraction of light; and the firſt Frenchman who has deſcribed a combat, in which the art of fencing forms a part of the deſcription.

In tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria, ſi quem
Numina læva ſinunt, auditque vocatus Apollo.

Numina læva are thoſe who perſecute me; and *vocatus Apollo* is my protector, at Remuſberg. That I may entirely obey my Apollo, I muſt

I muſt further inform him I have retrenched the four following lines, which concluded the firſt book.

Sur-tout, en écoutant ces triſtes avantures,
Pardonnez, grande reine, à des vérités dures
Qu'un autre eût pu vous taire, ou ſaurait mieux voiler,
Mais que Bourbon jamais n'a pu diſſimuler *.

As theſe diſagreeable truths, of which Henry IV. ſpeaks, did not glance at queen Elizabeth, but at kings whom Elizabeth did not love, it is ſelf evident that no apology was neceſſary to the queen. I had ſuffered this error to remain too long; and, inſtead of theſe lines, I have ſubſtituted

Un autre, en vous parlant, pourrait avec adreſſe, &c.

I have made a little addition to the ſixth book, when Potier demands audience, beginning thus:

Il élève la voix; on murmure, on s'empreſſe, &c.

I imagined theſe images were proper to the epic poem, *ut pictura poeſis erit.*

In the ſeventh book, ſpeaking of hell, I add—

* While liſtening to theſe mournful adventures, pardon, great queen, truths ſo diſagreeable, which another narrator might have buried in ſilence, or have veiled, but that Bourbon knows not to diſſemble.

Etes-vous

Etes-vous en ces lieux, faibles et tendres cœurs,
Qui, livrés aux plaifirs, et couchés fur des fleurs,
Sans fiel et fans fierté, couliez dans la pareffe
Vos inutiles jours, filés par la molleffe ?
Avec les feélérats feriez-vous confondus,
Vous, mortels bienfefans ; vous, amis des vertus ;
Qui, par un feul moment de doute, ou de faibleffe,
Avez féché les fruits de trente ans de fageffe * ?

This perhaps, fir, may infpire you with fome pity for the poor damned; among whom people fo worthy are found. But the moft effential change, in my poem, is an invocation, which ought immediately to fucceed that which I have made to the ftranger deity, Truth. To whom ought I to addrefs myfelf, if not to her favourite; a prince who loves and is beloved; a prince fo dear to me, and fo uncommon to the world? Thus, therefore, do I addrefs myfelf, to this adorable prince, at the beginning of the Henriade.

Et toi, jeune héros, toujours conduit par elle,
Difciple de Trajan, rival de Marc-Aurèle,

* Are you in thefe abodes, yielding and tender hearts, who, addicted to pleafures, and reclined on beds of flowers, devoid of gall or pride, paffed in happy indolence your ufelefs days? And you, beneficent mortals, friends of virtue, do you, for a fingle moment of doubt and weaknefs, after thirty years continued wifdom, fuffer like the infamous and the wicked?

Citoyen

Citoyen ſur le trône, et l'exemple du Nord,
Sois mon plus cher appui; ſois mon plus grand ſupport:
Laiſſe les autres rois, ces faux dieux de la terre,
Porter de toutes partes ou la fraude ou la guerre:
De leurs fauſſes vertus laiſſe les s'honorer:
Ils déſolent le monde, et tu dois l'éclairer *.

I requeſt, on my knees I requeſt, your royal highneſs will ſuffer theſe verſes to be printed, in the beautiful edition which you have undertaken of the Henriade. Wherefore forbid me, who only write for the promotion of truth, to ſpeak that truth which I hold moſt precious?

I expect to ſend your royal highneſs ſomething to amuſe you, when I come to the Netherlands. I have not omitted to make proviſion, notwithſtanding my illneſs. The Apollo of Remus and Emily are my ſupporters.

Madame du Chatelet neither knows how to thank your royal highneſs nor to have the Hungarian wine directed. It is our intention to depart at the beginning of May, and I will do myſelf the honour to write to your royal high-

* And thou, youthful hero, by Truth conducted, diſciple of Trajan, rival of Marcus Aurelius, a man, although a king, the example of the North, be thou my dereſt beſt ſupport! Let other monarchs, thoſe falſe gods of the earth, propagate war and fraud; let them glory in their falſe virtues! They deſolate that world which thou art doomed to enlighten!

neſs,

neſs, as ſoon as we ſhall know which way to ſteer our courſe.

As it is neceſſary to tell our maſter every thing that concerns us, it is probable that, on our return from the Netherlands, we ſhall fix our abode at Paris. Madame du Chatelet has lately purchaſed a houſe, built by one of the greateſt architects of France, and painted by Le Brun and Le Sueur *; a houſe proper for a philoſophic king. It is fortunately ſo diſtant, from the faſhionable part of the town, that we have purchaſed that for two hundred thouſand livres (eight thouſand three hundred pounds) which has coſt two millions in building and decorating. This I regard as a ſecond Cirey. The tears ſwim in my eyes, when I recollect how diſtant all this is from the ſtates of Marcus-Aurelius-Frederic. Nature committed a great miſtake, when ſhe cauſed me to be born a citizen of Paris. My body only will be there; my ſoul will ever remain with Emily, and the adorable prince to whom I ſhall ever pay the moſt profound reſpect, and with the permiſſion of your royal highneſs all the tenderneſs, &c.

* The Hotel Lambert.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Cirey, April 25, 1739.

I HAVE the honour to ſend your royal highneſs the lees of my wine—Here are the corrections of a work which never will be worthy of the ſingular protection it receives from you. I have done every thing which depended on me; your auguſt name muſt perform the reſt. Permit, ſir, the name of the moſt enlightened, moſt generous, and moſt amiable of princes to ſhed a ſplendour over the work, which will embelliſh its very defects. Indulge this teſtimony of my tender reſpect, which cannot be ſuſpected of flattery. This is the only kind of homage which the public approves: in this I am but the interpreter of every one who is acquainted with your genius; all know I ſhould ſay as much, were you not the heir of a throne.

I dedicated Zaire to a merchant, in whom I only ſought A MAN: he was my friend, and I honoured his virtue. I preſume to dedicate the Henriade to a ſuperior ſpirit! Prince though he

he be, I rather delight in his genius than revere his rank.

We ſhall depart immediately, ſir, and I ſhall do myſelf the honour to requeſt your royal highneſs will ſend me your commands, as ſoon as that chicanery, which has directed our courſe, will permit us to have any fixed place of reſidence. Madame du Chatelet is preparing to contend for ſmall eſtates, while probably you will contend for greater, in arms. Theſe eſtates are very near the theatre of that war which I dread.

Mantua væ miſeræ nimium vicina Cremonæ!

I flatter myſelf that a branch of your laurels, ſuſpended over the gate of the caſtle of Beringhen, will ſave it from deſtruction. Your tall grenadiers will do me no harm, when I ſhall ſhow them your letters. I ſhall tell them *non hîc in prælia veni.* They underſtand Virgil, no doubt; and, if they are determined on pillage, I ſhall exclaim *Barbarus has ſegetes!* At hearing which, for the firſt time, they will fly. Let me find any Pruſſian regiment attempting to ſtop me! Gentlemen, ſay I, do you know that your prince is cauſing my Henriade to be engraved; and that I belong to Emily? The co-

lonel will liſten to reaſon, and aſk me to ſupper; but unfortunately I never ſup.

I was one day taken as a ſpy, by the ſoldiers of the regiment of Conti. The prince, their colonel, inſtead of ordering me to be hanged, invited me to ſupper. But at preſent, ſir, I am in continual fear leſt the powers that be ſhould ſhew me a cord inſtead of a bottle. The cardinal de Fleuri formerly loved me, when I uſed to meet him at the houſe of the lady of marſhal Villars; *altri tempi altre cure.* It is now the faſhion to perſecute me, nor can I conceive how ſome pleaſantries, in this letter, have eſcaped me; amid the vexations which overwhelm my mind, and the perpetual pains which prey upon my body. But your portrait, to which I continually look up, ſays,

Macte animo.

Durum, ſed levius fit patientiâ,
Quidquid corrigere eſt nefas.

I once again venture to exhort your great genius to honour Virgil, in Niſus and Euryalus; and to confound Machiavel. It is for you to write the panegyric of friendſhip; it is for you to deſtroy that infamous policy which ſyſtematizes vice into virtue. The word policy, in its original ſignification, meant citizen; but, at

 preſent,

preſent, thanks to our perverſity, it means deceiver of citizens. Reſtore it, ſir, to its true ſignification: teach men to know and revere virtue.

I am labouring to finiſh a work which I ſhall do myſelf the honour to ſend your royal highneſs, as ſoon as my mind is ſufficiently at eaſe. You ſhall not want my frivolous productions; as long as they can afford you any amuſement, they are at your command.

The marchioneſs du Chatelet never fails to join her homage to mine.

I am, with the utmoſt reſpect and veneration,

SIR, &c.

LETTER LXXXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Rupin, May 16, 1739 *.

I RECEIVED two of your letters almoſt at the ſame time, and on the point of my departure for Berlin; ſo that I have been only able to ſend a general anſwer to both. I am infinitely

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

obliged to you, for having communicated the alterations which you have made in your Henriade. It is for you only to excel your former excellence. Every alteration which I have read is moſt excellent, and I never ceaſe wondering at the force which the French language acquires, in your works. Had Virgil been born a citizen of Paris, he never could have written any thing equal to the combat of Turenne. There is an ardour in the deſcription which tranſports me. Confeſs the truth! You were preſent at this combat; you ſaw it, and wrote down each lunge, each parry, given and received; you noted each geſture of the champions, and, by that ſuperior force peculiar to genius, read every thing that paſſed in the hearts of theſe valiant combatants. Caracci could not better have drawn the different attitudes of this duel; and Le Brun, with all his colouring, certainly never could have equalled the little picture of refraction, given by our amiable, our dear, philoſophic poet.

The paſſage added to the ſeventh book is alike admirable, and very proper to find a place in the edition which I am preparing, of the Henriade. But, my dear Voltaire, ſpare the race of bigots, and fear your perſecutors. This ſingle article is enough to bring you into new

troubles. Nothing is more pernicious than to be ſuſpected of irreligion. In vain do we make all imaginable efforts, to eſcape this blame; it is an accuſation that never is effaced. I ſpeak from experience, and perceive that extreme circumſpection is neceſſary on this ſubject.

Your verſes are conformable to reaſon, and conſequently muſt be to truth: but this is exactly the cauſe that idiots, and ſtupid people, will take offence. Do not, therefore, communicate them to your ungrateful country, but treat it as the ſun treats the Laplanders; ſuffer not the truth and beauty of your productions to ſhine any where, except in a place where the author is eſteemed and venerated; in fine, in a country where men are allowed not to continue ſtupid, where they are ſuffered to think, and, having thought, to ſpeak.

You will perceive I mean England; for there it is that I have found it convenient to have the Henriade engraved. I mean to write a preface, which I will communicate to you before I commit it to the preſs. Peſne makes the drawings for the plates, and Knobeldorf for the vignettes. It is impoſſible ſufficiently to honour the work, or enough to eſteem its reſpectable author. Poſterity ſhall owe the obligation to me of an engraved edition of the Hen-

riade; like as we are indebted to thoſe who have preſerved the Æneid, or the works of Phidias or Praxiteles.

I find you are determined that my name ſhall appear in your works. You imitate the prophet Elijah, who, aſcending to heaven, left his mantle to the prophet Eliſha. You are reſolved I ſhall participate in your fame. My name will ſtand like a hut in a beauteous landſcape, which is viſited for the ſake of ſurrounding objects.

After having ſpoken of the Henriade, and its author, ſilence ſhould enſue, and no other work be mentioned. I muſt, however, render you an account of my occupations.

I am at preſent employed on Machiavel. I am writing notes on his Prince, and have begun a work which will entirely refute his maxims, by the contradiction which is found between them and virtue, as well as by their oppoſition to the true intereſts of princes. It is not enough to point out virtue to men, we muſt alſo ſet the ſprings of intereſt in motion, without which but few will follow the dictates of reaſon. I cannot ſay when I ſhall have accompliſhed my taſk; for diſſipation, of various kinds, at preſent prevents me from a regular purſuit of the work. I hope, however, if my health and other occupations will

will permit, that in three months time I ſhall be able to ſend you the manuſcript.

Niſus and Euryalus muſt be civil enough to wait, till Machiavel is diſpatched. I keep pace with thoſe poor mortals who travel ſlowly: my graſp is not great. I would not have you imagine that each body has a hundred hands, like that of Voltaire-Briareus. One of the hands of this Voltaire is employed in philoſophy; another in poetry; a third on hiſtory; and ſo on, everlaſtingly. It is affirmed that this man has more than one mind, and that he himſelf forms a whole academy.

How much is a man tempted to bewail his fate, when he reflects on the unequal diviſion of talents, and on the poor portion, which falls to his ſhare! In vain would any one tell me of the equality of conditions; I will for ever maintain there is an infinite difference between that univerſal man I have juſt mentioned and other mortals. It certainly would be a great conſolation to me to be perſonally acquainted with him; but we are fated to travel ſuch different roads that it ſhould ſeem it is decreed we muſt fly each other.

You ſend me poetical food, for my mind; and I return you preſcriptions, for the recovery of your body: they are written by a very able

phyſician, whom I have conſulted, concerning your diſeaſe, and who affirms he does not deſpair of your cure. Take the medicines he indicates, for I hope you will derive benefit from them.

As this letter, according to all appearances, will find you at Bruſſels, I may ſpeak to you more freely on the ſubject of his eminence *, and your country at large. I have no patience when I recollect the little reſpect paid you, and I will willingly uſe my efforts to procure you, at leaſt, tranquillity. The marquis de la Chétardie, to whom I had written, is unfortunately departed from Paris; but I will find ſome means of letting the cardinal underſtand what I think, of a man whom I love and eſteem.

The Hungarian wine and amber ſhall be ſent off, as ſoon as I know if your erratic ſtar, and chicanery, have ſuffered you to ſtay at Bruſſels. Honi, my wine merchant, will give you this letter; but, when you write in anſwer, let me beg you to addreſs your letters to general Borck, at Weſel. Dear Ceſario, who is here at preſent, cannot forbear to reiterate every thing which eſteem and friendſhip can inſpire. Pray let the marchioneſs underſtand how high-

* The cardinal de Fleuri.

ly

ly I admire the author of the eſſay on fire, and how much I eſteem the friend of M. de Voltaire.

I am, &c.

LETTER XC.

From the Prince Royal.

May, 1739 *.

I HAVE only a moment to aſſure you of my friendſhip, and to pray you to accept the amber ink-ſtand and the trifles which I ſend. Be kind enough to give the other box, which contains *le jeu de quilles* † to the marchioneſs. We are ſo buſy here that we have ſcarcely time to breathe. A fortnight hence, I ſhall be able to be more prolix. The Hungarian wine cannot be ſent before the end of ſummer, becauſe of the heat of the weather. I am at preſent engaged in ſuperintending the edition of the Henriade. I will communicate every arrangement which I have made, on the ſubject.

* Dated June the 1ſt in the Berlin edition.

† Nine pins. No doubt in miniature. T.

We have loſt the moſt learned man of Berlin, who was the repoſitory of all the men of learning of Germany; an abſolute ſtore-houſe of ſcience. The celebrated M. de la Croze is buried, and with him twenty different languages; the quinteſſence of hiſtory and a multitude of anecdotes, no circumſtance of which had eſcaped his prodigious memory. Was he then doomed to learn ſo much and to die at the age of fourſcore?—Ought he not rather to have lived eternally, as a reward for his labours?

The works we poſſeſs of this prodigiouſly learned man do not, in my opinion, make him ſufficiently known. His memory, no doubt, was his brighteſt ornament: and of this he gave proofs on whatever ſubject might be propoſed. He would cite the edition, and the page, in which you might find what you wiſhed to be informed of, without ever being miſtaken. The infirmities of age did not diminiſh this extraordinary gift of memory; and, even to the laſt breath of life, he continued to amaſs treaſures of erudition, which are eternally hidden in the grave *.

* The French joins the next ſentence, and reads—"A "perfect knowledge of philoſophic ſyſtems and their prin- "cipal and minute parts were buried with him in the grave." —This, though the two editions agree, I imagine to be erroneous, and the effect of falſe pointing; which conjecture the context ſtrongly favours. T.

Although

Although he had a perfect knowledge of all philoſophic ſyſtems, as well of their principal as of their minute points, M. de la Croze was but an indifferent philoſopher: he followed the ſyſtem of Deſcartes, in which he had been educated, and probably acted from prejudice, and that he might not forget the habit to which he had been accuſtomed between ſixty and ſeventy years, of being of this opinion. Judgment, penetration, and a certain ardour of mind, which are ſo characteriſtic of original genius, were not a part of his compoſition: but, in revenge, unequivocal probity, in good or ill fortune, rendered him reſpectable, and deſerving the eſteem of all worthy people.

Pity us, my dear Voltaire! Great men die, and we do not perceive others ariſe! It ſhould ſeem that learning and orange trees muſt both be tranſplanted, into this country; and that our ungrateful ſoil is incapable of reproduction, when the ardent rays of the ſun, or the ſevere froſts of winter, have once dried up their juices.

Thus it was that, inſenſibly, and by degrees, barbariſm was introduced into the capital of the world, after the fortunate age of Cicero and Virgil. When poet ſucceeds to poet, philoſopher to philoſopher, and orator to orator, we then may hope to ſee the ſciences perpetuated.

But,

But, when death robs us of them, ſucceſſively, without any proſpect of ſubſtitutes for the age to come, it does not ſeem as if we interred a learned man, but rather the ſciences themſelves.

I am, with all thoſe ſentiments which you ſo well know how to inſpire, and which are ſo difficult to expreſs, &c.

LETTER XCI.

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1739.

YOUR royal highneſs takes the part of citadels againſt Machiavel, and it ſhould ſeem that the empire thinks after the ſame manner, for twelve hundred florins truly have been ſet apart for the repairs of Philipſburg, to complete which it is ſaid more than twelve thouſand are neceſſary.

There are few fortreſſes in the two Sicilies, and this is the reaſon theſe countries have had ſo many different maſters. Did we find ſuch places as Namur, Valenciennes, Tournay, and Luxemburg, in Italy—

Che

Che or giù da l'Alpi non vedrei torrenti
Scender d'armati ne di ſangue tinta
Bever l'onda del Po, gallici armenti;
Ne la vedrei del non ſuo ferro cinta,
Pugnar col braccio di ſtraniere genti,
Per ſervir ſempre, o vincitrice, o vinta *.

The emperor and the Engliſh muſt neceſſarily retake this fine country, in the enſuing ſpring, or it would remain too long under one and the ſame government. Happy, ſir, are thoſe who can live under your protection.

I have begun, ſir, to take your powder: either there is no Providence or it will do me good. I have no expreſſions ſufficient to thank Marcus Aurelius transformed to Eſculapius.

I am, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the tendereſt gratitude, &c.

* We then ſhould not behold ſuch armed multitudes deſcend from the Alps; nor the crowding Gaul drink the waters of the blood-tinged Po; nor Italy, girded by ſwords not native there, fighting with a foreign arm, and, whether victor or vanquiſhed, ſtill enſlaved.

LETTER XCII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, June 1, 1739.

IT is decreed that I muſt be indebted to your royal highneſs for the recovery of my health. For about a month I have been denied to write, but at length my deſire to write to my ſovereign has given me ſtrength. I muſt have been very ill, when the verſes which I received from Berlin, dated April the 26th, were unable to reanimate my body, while animating my mind. The epiſtle on the neceſſity of filling up the vacuum of the year, by ſtudy, is, I believe, the beſt poetical work which has been produced by my modern Marcus Aurelius.

C'eſt ainſi qu'à Berlin, à l'ombre du ſilence,
Je conſacrais mes jours aux Dieux de la ſcience *.

The whole of the concluſion is finiſhed, and the other parts of the piece are every where adorned with flights of fancy. Your *reaſon* has a deal of *wit:* but I am ſtill more ſtrongly in-

* Thus at Berlin, in ſilent ſhades, I dedicate my days to the Gods of ſcience.

tereſted in another of your children; I mean your refutation of Machiavel. I have read it again, and can again aſſure your royal highneſs that it is a work neceſſary to the good of mankind. I will not conceal from you that I have diſcovered repetitions; and that, though one of the fineſt trees in the world, it muſt be lopped. I ſpeak the truth to you, great prince, becauſe you merit it ſhould be ſpoken; and hope that, hereafter, when you ſhall be ſeated on a throne, you will then find friends who will ſpeak with equal freedom. You are formed to be ſingular, in every thing you undertake; and to enjoy pleaſures of which other kings are deſtined to remain ignorant. The baron von Kayſerling will give you notice, when, by chance, you ſhall have paſſed a day without making any man happy; a circumſtance which will rarely occur.

In the mean time, I will employ myſelf in adding points, and commas, to the Anti-Machiavel; and will profit by the permiſſion which your royal highneſs has given me. I ſhall this day write to a bookſeller in Holland, till ſuch time as there ſhall be an excellent printing-houſe, and paper manufactory, at Berlin, which may ſupply all Germany.

I have this very moment been informed there

are

are ſome old pamphlets, in print, written againſt Machiavel's Prince. The titles of three of them I have been told: the firſt is *Anti-Machiavel*; the ſecond *Diſcours d'Etat contre Machiavel* *; the third *Fragmens contre Machiavel* †.

I ſhall be very glad to ſee them, that, if there ſhould be occaſion, I may mention them in my preface; but theſe works are probably very indifferent ſince they are difficult to be found. This will not retard the impreſſion of the fineſt work with which I am acquainted. How excellent a portrait do you there give of the French, and their government! How intereſting and ſtrong is the chapter on eccleſiaſtical powers! The compariſon between Holland and Ruſſia, and the reflections on the vanity of great lords, who are monarchs in miniature, are moſt charming morſels. I am now about to finiſh the fourth reading, with the pen in my hand. The work awakens in me a deſire to finiſh my hiſtory of the age of Louis XIV. I bluſh at writing ſo many frivolous things, while my prince teaches me to what purpoſe I ought to write.

What will your royal highneſs ſay to me,

* A political Diſcourſe againſt Machiavel.

† Fragments againſt Machiavel.

when

when you are told that a new tragedy of mine is preparing to be played, at Paris, which is not Mahomet? It is a tale of love; rose water distilled for the use of the French ladies *. It is for this reason that I have not ventured to mention it to your royal highness: I am ashamed of my effeminacy. Not that the piece is without a moral: it paints the dangers of love, as Mahomet does the dangers of fanaticism.

It is my intention again to correct much of Mahomet, and render it less unworthy of being dedicated to you. I mean to re-write the whole piece. I would pass my life in correcting myself, that I might merit the good graces of my adorable sovereign, and Emily. Your royal highness must have received a little philosophy, on my part, and much from her. Madame du Chatelet is, what I wish to be, worthy of your court.

I am, with profound respect, and the most lively gratitude, &c.

* The tragedy alluded to, here and in former letters, is Zulime.

LET-

LETTER XCIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Remuſberg, June 26, 1739.

I HEARTILY wiſh your wandering ſtar would fix, for my bewildered imagination no longer knows in what part of Brabant to ſeek you. Should but this erratic planet once direct your ſteps toward our ſolitude, I would aſſuredly employ all the ſecrets aſtronomy can teach to ſtop its courſe. I would even apply to aſtrology; would learn necromancy, and offer invocations to every god and every dæmon, that they might not permit you any more to quit theſe countries. But Ulyſſes, in deſpite of the incantations of Circe, thought only of leaving her iſland, in which all the careſſes of the enchantreſs, goddeſs as ſhe was, had leſs power over his heart than the remembrance of his dear Penelope. If I do not miſtake, you would reſemble Ulyſſes; and the deep memory of the beautiful Emily, and the power of affection, would be ſuperior to all my gods and dæmons. It is but juſt that recent friendſhip ſhould cede to that of longer date; I therefore yield to the marchioneſs:

marchioneſs: but be it underſtood, on condition that ſhe ſupport my ſecondary claims, againſt every opponent.

I thought I might have proceeded tolerably faſt, in what I propoſed to write againſt Machiavel; but I find the imagination of youth is a little too ardent. To know every thing which has been written upon Machiavel, it was neceſſary to read a great number of books; and, in order to digeſt all I had read, additional time muſt be employed. The journey which we are about to make, into Pruſſia, will likewiſe occaſion ſome interruption, in my ſtudies; and retard the Henriade, Machiavel, and Euryalus.

I have not received any anſwer from England, but you may reſt aſſured it is a thing determined, and that the Henriade ſhall be engraved. I hope I ſhall be able to ſend you news of the work, and the preface to it, before my return from Pruſſia, which may be about the 15th of Auguſt. An indolent prince, in my apprehenſion, is an animal of ſmall utility in the world. I wiſh, at leaſt, to ſerve my age, as far as I have the power. I wiſh to contribute to the immortality of a work which is uſeful to mankind. I wiſh to multiply copies of a poem, in which the author teaches the duties of every claſs, a manner of reigning but little known to princes, and

of thinking which would more have ennobled the gods of Homer than even their cruelties and caprices have rendered them contemptible.

You give a true but fearful portrait of religious wars, the wickedneſs of prieſts, and the fatal effects of falſe zeal. Theſe are leſſons which cannot be too often repeated to men, who ought, at leaſt, to be rendered more prudent, by paſt folly.

What I meditate, againſt Machiavel, is properly a continuation of the Henriade. On the great ſentiments of Henry IV. I forge the thunder which is to fall on Cæſar Borgia. With reſpect to Niſus and Euryalus, they muſt wait till time, and your corrections, have invigorated my poetic vein.

I ſend the Hungarian wine, addreſſed to the duke d'Aremberg, by lieutenant Schilling. The duke is certainly the patriarch of good fellows, and may be regarded as the father of joy and pleaſure. Silenus has beſtowed a countenance on him which does not belie his character, and which in him diſplays an amiable voluptuouſneſs, purified from every obſcenity attending on debauch.

I hope the air you breathe, in Brabant, is more free than that of France; and that the ſecurity of this abode will no leſs contribute than medicine

medicine to your health; for which I aſſure you I am greatly intereſted: not a day paſſes in which I do not offer up prayers, in your favour, to the goddeſs Hygeia.

I hope all my packets are come ſafe to hand, but pray be kind enough to inform me. It is ſaid that the Pleaſures have given you the meeting, on your route—

That, hand in hand, the Siſters three,
Sweet Song, and Dance, and Comedy,
Attend your ſteps; and, on your way,
With their aſſociates ſport and play:
That all the Loves, and ſmiling Hours,
The road you travel, ſtrew with flow'rs;
In ſweet contention, ſtriving who
Thoſe honours beſt ſhall pay, to you,
Which are perform'd, with rites divine,
To Phœbus, by the Muſes nine!

It is further added—

From Paris late the Graces fled,
With true Politeneſs; and, inſtead
Of deities ſo bleſt, is ſeen
That gaping, whining witch, the Spleen!
And that, in theſe abodes of fraud,
The multitude is taught t' applaud
The crooked paths of Policy,
Who quite has baniſh'd Honeſty.
They ſay that Truth is alſo flown,
Fearing a prieſt with pride o'ergrown;
A tyrant, and, of conſequence,
The foe of freedom, wit, and ſenſe.

Here is a poetical gazette for you, after the fashion of Remusberg. If you delight in news, I promise you as much as you please, in prose and verse, on my return.

A thousand assurances of esteem, to my rival in your affections, to Emily, I hope you will keep the engagements, which you have entered into, with Superville, of being obedient.

Cesario will tell you all that a heart like his feels, when it has been fortunate enough to become acquainted with yours. For my own part, I am, more than ever, &c.

LETTER XCIV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, July 7, 1739.

I HAVE received the ingenious travels of the baron de Gangan * at the very instant of my departure from Remusberg. I have been much amused by the celestial traveller; though I have remarked in him some touches of satire,

* This is probably the work which has since been printed under the title of *Micromégas*.

and

and malicious wit, which make him greatly resemble the inhabitants of our earth; but which he manages so well that we perceive in him a more ripened judgment, and a more lively imagination, than in any other thinking being.

There is an article, in these travels, in which I discover the affection and prejudice of my friend, in favour of the editor of the Henriade. Yet permit me to express my astonishment at perceiving, in a work, in which you wish to humble the ridiculous vanity of man, and reduce that to its just value which he has been accustomed to call great, a work in which pride and presumption are lowered, to perceive; I say, in this, an attempt to increase my self-love, and furnish arguments in favour of the good opinion I may have conceived of myself.

All that I can say on the subject is this; the eye of friendship sees objects through a medium that bears no resemblance to that through which they are viewed by the eye of insensibility, or indifference.

I hope my last letter, in company with the Hungarian wine, has by this time arrived. Your residence at Bruffels will but little accelerate our correspondence, for a time; for I am immediately to depart, on a journey as dull as it is fatiguing. We are to travel more than a

thouſand German miles in five weeks. We ſhall paſs through places but ill inhabited, and which will be as little agreeable to me as the country of the Getæ was to Ovid, in his exile. Let me entreat you to redouble your correſpondence; for not leſs than two of your letters per week can revive me, under ſtupor ſo inſupportable.

Bruſſels, and almoſt all Germany, partake of their ancient barbarity: the arts are there but little honoured, and conſequently but little cultivated. The nobles ſerve in the army; or, with a ſlight degree of knowledge, enter at the bar; not to ſtudy, but to enjoy their eaſe. The petty gentry, well rented, live in the country, or rather in the woods, which renders them as ferocious as the animals they hunt. The nobility of this country, in general, reſemble thoſe of other German provinces; except that they have a greater deſire to gain inſtruction, more vivacity, and, if I dare ſo ſay, more genius than the chief part of the nation; and eſpecially than the Weſtphalians, Franconians, Suabians and Auſtrians. For which reaſon, we may one day expect to ſee the arts here reſcued from the vulgar, and inhabiting wealthy houſes and palaces. Berlin principally contains, in itſelf, if I may venture to uſe the expreſſion, the embers

bers of all the arts: genius is every where ſeen ſparkling, and a lucky breath of air is only wanting, to give life to thoſe ſciences which rendered Athens, and Rome, more famous than all their wars and conqueſts.

You muſt be particularly ſenſible of the difference, between the life led at Paris and that at Bruſſels; you, who can only exiſt ſurrounded by the arts; and who have collected, at Cirey, every thing that delicate voluptuouſneſs could conceive, or whatever was moſt poignant, among the pleaſures of the imagination.

The Spaniſh gravity of the archducheſs, and the ſtarched ceremony of her little court, will not inſpire a philoſopher, who eſtimates all things by their intrinſic value, with much veneration. I am certain the baron of Gangan would pourtray the ridicule of theſe things, were he to continue his travels as far as Bruſſels.

Adieu, my dear friend; I am departing. Let me beg you to ſupply me with whatever your pen ſhall produce; for my underſtanding is in great danger of expiring with inanity, unleſs its life ſhould be preſerved by your cares.

I work, as hard as my leiſure will permit, againſt Machiavel, and for the Henriade; and I hope I ſhall be able to ſend you the preface, to the new edition, from Kœnigſberg.

A thouſand marks of eſteem to the divine Emily. I cannot comprehend how any body can appear in court againſt her; or of what nature the law-ſuit, with which ſhe is troubled, can be. I have no intereſts to diſcuſs with her, except thoſe of the heart.

Take care of your health: do not forget how much I am intereſted in your preſervation, and that my content and your proſperity are connected, by indiſſoluble ties.

I am, &c.

P. S. The phyſician, whom I have recommended to you, is named Superville; a man of experience, on whoſe knowledge I can depend. Addreſs the letters which you write for him to me: I will take care you ſhall have his anſwers; but do not neglect his advice, and I have then reaſon to hope the feebleneſs of your conſtitution may be remedied, and the infirmities with which your life is embittered removed.

LET-

LETTER XCV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, Bruſſels, 1739.

AMID the delights of Enghien, Emily and I have received the moſt ſupreme pleaſure we could poſſibly taſte. A perſon, who has had the happineſs to ſee my young Marcus Aurelius, has brought us a charming letter from him; together with amber ink ſtands, and boxes.

From good Mr. Gerard, we ardently ſeiz'd
Your preſents, of pleaſure and profit, well pleas'd!

Hereafter, ſir, we ſhall play at cards with the counters you have furniſhed, and write with your pens of amber.

Of many a piteous and pellucid tear,
Shed by his ſiſters who, from Sol's dread ſphere,
By angry Jove, was for preſumption hurl'd
Flaming to earth, and half conſum'd the world,
This amber erſt was form'd, as has been ſaid.
Hard was the fate of each too wretched maid;
They weeping were to pines transform'd the while:
Pines meant to form the youth's funereal pile.

The Gods daily overturn thoſe charioteers who under-

undertake to drive us, and ſeldom are tears ſhed at their downfall.

On our return from Enghien, we had ſcarcely arrived at Bruſſels before we received another and a new conſolation; a letter from your royal highneſs, dated July the 7th, by way of Amſterdam. It ſeems you are acquainted with the country in which I am. I here meet with many princes, but few men; that is to ſay, thinking, well informed, men.

What then, ſir, is to become, in your city of Berlin, of the ſciences which you encourage, and to which you do ſo much honour? Who ſhall replace M. de la Croze? It muſt no doubt be M. Jordan. He ſeems to me to be in the true road of erudition.

But, after all, ſir, there will always be men of learning. The men of genius, by communicating their thoughts and feelings, will render others learned: they are the eldeſt ſons of Prometheus, who proceed diſtributing celeſtial fire to ill organized maſſes; and of theſe there will always be very few, in every country. The whole ardour of the marchioneſs is, at preſent, employed in this diſagreeable law-ſuit; which has obliged her to quit her favourite ſolitude, at Cirey: while I am collecting my few trifles to form

form ſomething new, which may pleaſe the modern Marcus Aurelius.

I therefore take the liberty to ſend you the firſt act of a tragedy; which, if I am not miſtaken, is written, if not in a good, at leaſt in a new taſte. Superſtition and fanaticiſm have never been repreſented on the ſtage; and, ſhould not this eſſay diſpleaſe my judge, I will ſend the remainder, act by act.

I meant to have done myſelf the honour to ſend this beginning by M. de Valori, who is to reſide as French envoy in Pruſſia. If I am not miſinformed, he is worthy to dine with the father, and ſup with the ſon. I daily expect to ſee him at Bruſſels, and hope I ſhall find in him a new patron, with your royal highneſs.

The thouſand German miles, which you are about to travel, will ſomewhat retard the defeat of Machiavel, and the inſtructions which I expect to receive from your revered and cheriſhed hand. I know not whether the baron von Kayſerling has the good fortune to accompany your royal highneſs: he is either to be pitied or envied.

I will write to M. de Superville. I had no faith in phyſicians, till your royal highneſs became the Eſculapius who condeſcended to take care of my health.

Emily

Emily leaves her lawyers, that ſhe may have the honour of writing to the patron of the arts, and of humanity.

I am, &c.

LETTER XCVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Bruſſels, 1739.

SOME million ages of the mighty dead
Had paſs'd away, ſince firſt 'twas ſung, or ſaid,
How ſly Prometheus, wanting much ſuch wealth,
The ſacred fire of heav'n purloin'd, by ſtealth.
This on our fires he generouſly beſtow'd;
With genial heat terreſtrial nature glow'd;
Each land had part; but, bound in icy chains,
Extinct the hyperborean fire remains.
Fierce Teuton, Cimbrian, Vandal, Oſtrogoth,
To loſe the quick'ning ſenſe of pleaſure loth,
In butts of heady beer and pipes of wine,
Long ſought in vain to find the ſpark divine;
A black thick vapour fill'd the vacant ſpace,
And did but ſtupify the heavy race.
At length, indeed, the great Chriſtina came,
In whom was ſeen ſome portion of the flame;
But with her treaſure ſoon ſhe ſallied forth,
And fled the frozen regions of the North,

Where

Where ſlumb'ring Nature, pent in caverns, lies
In twilight gloom, and neither lives nor dies!
But, at the moment when her ſons refrain
All further ſearch, and deem their labour vain,
My prince the bleſs'd depoſit finds entire!
On Remus' ſummit flames the ſacred fire;
Whence he, in whom 'tis ſeen ſo bright to glow,
Communicates it to the wondering world below!
Again the arts revive; and Wiſdom reigns,
Auguſt in ſplendor, o'er theſe happy plains;
While Earth exclaims, in joys but half expreſs'd,
"Once more Prometheus lives, and I am bleſs'd!"

This ſhort allegorical truth took birth, my adorable monarch, at ſight of the laſt packet from your royal highneſs; in which you paſs ſo excellent a judgment on metaphyſics, and appear ſo amiable, ſo good and great, in verſe and proſe. Well may I call you my Prometheus! Your fire revives the embers of a ſoul enfeebled by many ills and ſufferings. For a month paſt, I have been in continual anguiſh. A few days ago, I ſnatched a moment to write to your royal highneſs, during which my pain ceaſed: but I know not whether my letter has reached you; it was in a cover, and addreſſed to the correſpondents of Mr. David Gerard, who have thought proper to become bankrupts. I have the honour to be included in their misfortune, for ſome trifling effects, which I had

confided to them. But my moſt precious wealth is my correſpondence with Marcus Aurelius; if none of my letters to him are loſt, they may loſe every thing elſe I poſſeſs, and I will not once complain.

In that letter, I had the honour to inform your royal highneſs that I was on the point of publiſhing the catechiſm of virtue, and that leſſon for princes in which falſe politics, and the logic of knaves, are confounded with ſo much wit, and force of argument. I have uſed the liberty you gave me, and have endeavoured to make the chapters nearly equal in length to thoſe of Machiavel. I have thrown in a handful of mortar, in one or two places, into this edifice of marble. Forgive me, and ſuffer me ſtill further to retrench that which relates to religious diſputes, in the twenty-firſt chapter.

Machiavel there ſpeaks of the addreſs with which Ferdinand of Arragon drew money from the church, under pretence of making war on the Moors, and which he employed for the invaſion of Italy. The queen of Spain has juſt done the ſame. Ferdinand of Arragon carried his hypocriſy ſo far as to expel the Moors, that he might acquire the name of good catholic, empty with impunity the purſes of his ſilly catholic ſubjects, and religiouſly pillage the

Moors.

Moors. There is therefore no queſtion, in this paſſage, concerning the diſputes of prieſts and the venerable follies of theologians, and ſectaries, which you, in another place, treat as they deſerve.

For this reaſon, with your permiſſion, I ſhall take the liberty to cut off this trifling excreſcence, from a body the ſymmetry of which is admirable, in all its parts. I can never ceaſe repeating, it will be a very ſingular, and very uſeful book.

And does your royal highneſs, while performing things like theſe, deign to ſend for ſilver type, from England, to print the Henriade? And is printing the firſt of the fine arts, to which your royal highneſs will give birth? It is an art which indeed ought to be dear to you, for it ſhall perpetuate your virtues, as examples to poſterity. How many others ſoon will follow, and how quickly will Berlin become another Athens! But the firſt riſing art revives in my favour; in my behalf, you begin to do good.

Yes, I'm your ſubject; yours; my heart has ceas'd
Dependence on a proud capricious prieſt.
Heav'n heard my prayers, which daily I renew;
A ſage I wiſh'd, a ſage I find in you!
A noble hero! One of thoſe who ſeek
T' unmaſk the bigot and protect the weak!

His

His gods the Virtues are; his ſons the Arts;
To me his thoughts inſpired the prince imparts:
With me th' untrodden wilds he deigns to wend
Of truth and poetry; me deigns to lend
His light and aid! Hear this, ye ſlaves of ſtate,
Who toil with bulky burthen, void of weight!
Who always thoughtful, yet who never think!
Hear kings! and, if you can, forbear to ſhrink!
Ye phantoms, whom a fooliſh world obeys,
Follow a guide ſo great, and merit praiſe!

May I venture to miſuſe the goodneſs of your royal highneſs, ſo far as to ſuggeſt an idea which originated in your bounties?

Your royal highneſs is the only protector of the Henriade. Tapeſtry is here excellently manufactured; and, with your permiſſion, I would cauſe four or five pieces to be woven, containing the four or five moſt pictureſque deſigns with which you deign to embelliſh the work. The maſſacre of St. Bartholemew, the temple of Fate, the temple of Love, and the battle of Ivry, I imagine would furniſh four excellent pieces of tapeſtry, for ſome chamber in your palace, according to the dimenſions which your royal highneſs ſhould ſend. I believe they would be executed in ſomething leſs than two years I foreſee that the law-ſuit of madame du Chatelet, which detains me at Bruſſels, may continue three or four years. I ſhall certainly have time to

ſerve

ſerve your royal highneſs, in this little attempt, if you ſhould ſo wiſh. I likewiſe foreſee that, if your royal highneſs ſhould hereafter deſire to form a tapeſtry manufactory in your Athens, you may eaſily procure workmen from this place. I ſeem already to ſee all the arts aſſembled at Berlin, and trade and pleaſure flouriſhing; for I place pleaſure in the rank of the fineſt arts.

Madame du Chatelet has received the letter of your royal highneſs, and will ſoon do herſelf the honour to write an anſwer. You have good reaſon, ſir, to ſay that people ought not to quarrel concerning metaphyſics; it is the province only of divines to hate each other for what they do not underſtand. I own I ſhould willingly place at the end of every chapter on metaphyſics, the L and the N of the Roman ſenators, which ſignified *non liquet*, and which they wrote upon their tablets, when the advocates had not ſufficiently explained the cauſe.

With reſpect to geometry, I imagine that, except ſome forty theorems on which all ſound phyſical philoſophy is founded, the remainder contains little more than difficult truths, which in themſelves are dry and uſeleſs. I am glad that I am not wholly ignorant of, though I ſhould be ſorry to be too learned in, geometry, and to give up ſo many agreeable things in behalf of fruit-

leſs combinations. I am better pleaſed with your Anti-Machiavel than with all the curves that have, or have not, been ſquared. I take more delight in a good hiſtory than in a theorem, which may be true without being beautiful.

Be aſſured, ſir, that I alſo place well-written epiſtles in the rank of pleaſures, preferable to ſines and tangents. The epiſtle on falſehood charms and aſtoniſhes me; for, though you are better in health than I am, though you are of an age in which genius is in its full force, your days are not longer than ours, and you, no doubt, are occupied by the plans which you trace, for the good of mankind. You are trying your ſtrength in ſecret, that you may be able to bear the ſplendid but painful burden, which ſoon will be laid upon your ſhoulders. Yet is my Prometheus Apollo, whenever he pleaſes.

How fortunate is M. de Camas, to merit and to receive ſuch praiſes! I am particularly pleaſed with that crowd of ſplendid images, with which you embelliſh the art you ſo much honour. At this moment I ſee vice *an immenſe and ſtormy ocean*, and preſently it is

Un monſtre couronné, de qui les ſifflemens
Ecartent, loin de lui, la vérité ſi pure *.

* A ſceptred monſter, whoſe hiſſings drive pure truth far from his preſence.

I particularly

I particularly remark examples drawn from hiſtory, and diſcover the hand which has heaped confuſion on Machiavel.

I know not, ſir, whether you will be ſtill on Mount Remus or on the throne, when Anti-Machiavel ſhall appear. Diſeaſes like that with which the king is afflicted are ſometimes tedious. I have a nephew, whom I tenderly love, who is abſolutely in the ſame ſtate, and who, for theſe ſix months, has been ſtruggling for life. Whatever may happen, nothing can increaſe the ſentiments of reſpect, and tender gratitude, with which I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Inſterburg, July 27, 1739.

HERE at length we are, after a journey of three weeks, in a country which I conſider as the *non plus ultra* of the civilized world; a province but little known in Europe, but which merits, however, to be known; ſince it may be regarded as the creation of the king, my father.

Pruſſian Lithuania is a dutchy, containing thirty great German leagues in length, and twenty in width, though it narrows toward Sa-

mogitia. This province was ravaged by the plague, in the beginning of the prefent century; and more than three hundred thoufand inhabitants perifhed, by difeafe and want. The court, ill informed of the miferies of the people, neglected to aid a rich and fertile province, full of inhabitants, and fruitful in every kind of production. Difeafe carried off the people, and the lands remained uncultivated, and overgrown with brambles. The very cattle were not exempt from the public calamity: in a word, the moft flourifhing of our provinces was changed into a moft fearful defert.

In the mean time, Frederic I. died; and he and his falfe grandeur were buried together; grandeur which only confifted in vain pomp, and a faftidious difplay of frivolous ceremonies.

My father, his fucceffor, was affected by the public mifery, repaired to the province, and was a perfonal fpectator of this vaft country thus laid wafte, with all thofe traces which a contagious difeafe, famine, and the fordid avarice of miniffters had left behind. Ten or fifteen depopulated towns, and four or five hundred uninhabited and uncultivated villages, was the mournful profpect which prefented itfelf. Far from being difcouraged, by objects like thefe, he felt the moft lively compaffion, and determined to people and reftore plenty and commerce to a country

country which had loſt the very form of a country.

Since this time, the king has ſpared no expence, to ſucceed in his ſalutary views. He firſt formed wiſe regulations; he then rebuilt all that the peſtilence had laid deſolate, and ſent for ſome thouſands of families, from all parts of Europe. The lands were cleared, the country re-peopled; commerce began to flouriſh, and at preſent the country is more abundant and fertile than ever.

Lithuania contains more than half a million of inhabitants; the towns and the cattle are increaſed, and there is more wealth and fruitfulneſs here than in any part of Germany; for all of which it is indebted to the king; who not only iſſued orders but perſonally took care that they were obeyed; formed plans and executed them himſelf; ſpared no care, no labour, no ſums, however immenſe, no promiſes, no rewards, that he might confirm half a million of thinking beings, who are indebted to him for their felicity and eſtabliſhment, in life and proſperity.

I hope you will not be diſpleaſed with this account. Your humanity will extend to your Lithuanian brethren, as well as to thoſe in France, England, Germany, and elſewhere; and the more ſo becauſe, to my great aſtoniſh-

ment, I have paſſed through villages in which I heard nothing but French ſpoken.

I have diſcovered I know not what of heroiſm, in the generous and laborious manner in which the king has rendered the deſert habitable, fertile, and happy; and, if I am not deceived, you will have the ſame ſenſations, when informed of the circumſtances of this re-eſtabliſhment.

I daily expect your letters from Enghien: I hope you there enjoy perfect repoſe, and that Dulneſs, that heavy ſtupid deity, will not dare to aſſault you in the arms of Emily. Do not forget me, my dear friend, but reſt perſuaded that my diſtance does but increaſe my impatience to ſee and embrace you. Farewel.

My compliments to the marchioneſs, and the duke; for whom Apollo and Bacchus contend.

LETTER XCVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR, August 12, 1739.

I TAKE the liberty to ſend your royal highneſs the ſecond act of Mahomet, by favour of the ſieurs David Gerard and company. I

 wiſh

wiſh the Muſſulmen may be as ſucceſsful, with your royal highneſs, as they have been in Moldavia. I certainly could not have taken a better opportunity to entertain you concerning theſe infidels, of whom the world ſpeaks more loudly than ever.

I imagine your royal highneſs is, at this moment, on thoſe ſhores on which that fine amber is gathered which, thanks to your goodneſs, is ſent to us in the form of ink-ſtands, and other articles. I was always a loſer at cards, when I played with common fiſh; but ſince I have played with the amber fiſh, ſent by your royal highneſs, I have continually won.

> No more I fear diſgrace; my prince preſides,
> And me protects, enlightens, loves, and guides.

I will entreat the luminous ſtar of Frederic to ſhine over my head during a ſhort reſidence which I am going to make with the marchioneſs, your ſubject, at Paris. For philoſophers, ours is a very wandering life; but our prince, more a philoſopher than ourſelves, is not leſs ambulatory. Should I meet any tall fellow on my road, ſix feet high, I will tell him to go immediately and ſerve in the regiment of my prince. And, ſhould I ſtumble on any man of wit, I

ſhall ſay to him—" How unfortunate that you " do not reſide at his court!"

Yours, indeed, is the only court for thinking beings. Your royal highneſs knows what others are: that of France is a little more gay, ſince the king has ventured to be in love. He is at preſent in the train of becoming a great man, for he has feeling. Woe be to the hardened heart. God bleſſes the affectionate ſoul. Inſenſibility has I know not what of reprovable; for which reaſon St. Thereſa defined the devil to be the wretched being that is incapable of love.

We hear of nothing, at Paris, but feſtivals and fire-works. I know not how much money is ſquandered in powder, and ſky-rockets. Money formerly was expended in pleaſures of the underſtanding; and, when Louis XIV. gave feſtivals, they were regulated by men like Corneille, Moliere, Quinault, Lulli, and Le Brun. I am chagrined to be told of a feſtival ſo momentary, which conſiſts of nothing but noiſe, crowd, and a few diamonds. I wiſh it ſhould deſcend to poſterity. Our maſters, the Romans, underſtood theſe things better: their amphitheatres, and triumphal arches, built for ſome ſolemn day, ſtill pleaſe and afford us information. We raiſe a ſcaffold in the place de Grève, where the

the day before ſome thieves have been broken on the wheel; and fire cannon from the town-hall. I could rather wiſh theſe cannons were planted to batter down the town-hall, which is built in the worſt taſte poſſible; and that the money ſpent in ſquibs was employed in erecting another. A prince who builds neceſſarily cauſes the arts to flouriſh: painting, ſculpture, and engraving are the attendants of architecture. One fine edifice is deſtined for muſic; another for comedy. At Paris, we have neither any theatre for comedy nor opera; and, from a contradiction too worthy of ourſelves, the moſt excellent works are repreſented on the vileſt theatres. Good dramatic writings are found in France, and fine theatres in Italy.

I talk of nothing but pleaſures to your royal highneſs, while you are ſeriouſly combating Machiavel, for the good of mankind. But I act according to my vocation, as my prince does according to his; at the moſt, I can but amuſe; he is deſtined to inſtruct mankind.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XCIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Kœnigſberg, Auguſt 9, 1739.

I.

AUTHOR ſublime! Enchanting friend!
Whoſe ſtreams Pierian ever flow,
So pure, ſo plenteous, and ſo full;
Nor ebbs nor ſhallows ever know!

II.

In Lithuania's frozen climes
Your mighty genius is renown'd;
Here have I ſeen your tragic muſe
Falſe zeal and bigot pride confound.

III.

Your philoſophic works are mine;
Your travell'd baron too is here;
With all which you ſo well have ſaid,
In honour of the great Moliere.

IV.

What, blindly ſtill a ſon like this,
Ungrateful France, canſt thou neglect!
Yet, with thy honours and thy wealth,
Thy dull academy protect!

In reality, I am certain theſe forty heads, that are paid for thinking and employed to write, do not perform half the work that you do; and that, if we could eſtimate or weigh thought, the whole ideas of that numerous bo-

dy,

dy, collectively, would kick the beam, if weighed against yours. The ſciences are attainable by all men; but the art of thinking is the moſt uncommon gift Nature has to beſtow.

Baniſh'd the ſchools this art has been;
Nor ever was with pedant ſeen.
The holy inquiſition would
Prohibit thinking, if they could.
For moſt, who wear the ſacred veſt,
Do thinking cordially deteſt.
The ſilly mob pretend this art
Is theirs, they've all the rules by heart;
While Flatt'ry vows, in humble tone,
'Tis to her patron only known.
Ignorance, wide eyed, believes 'tis found
In ſome uncouth, unmeaning ſound;
And wond'ring hears Hyperbole explain
An art, which Wiſdom ſcarcely can attain!

Among a hundred perſons, who imagine they think, there is ſcarcely one who thinks for himſelf; the remainder have only ſome two or three ideas, which keep their rotation, without change, or aſſuming any new form. And even the hundredth will perhaps think what ſome other has before thought, and not poſſeſs genius, and a creative imagination. Theſe are the qualities that multiply ideas, and ſearch the relations which exiſt between things, of which the inattentive man has ſcarcely any perception; and this ſearch is the eſſential power which, according to me, is peculiar to the man of genius.

This

This rare and precious gift, no art of ſpeech
Has, ever yet, invented rules to teach!
Nature, or avaricious, poor, or ſage,
Scarcely beſtows it more than once an age.
But thine it is, no matter how, or why;
I'll waſte no time to prove, what none deny.

Three ſorts of works, which have fallen from your pen, have arrived here in ſix weeks. I imagine that there is, in ſome part of France, a ſelect ſociety of men, of equal and high genius, who labour together, and publiſh their works under the name of Voltaire; as another ſociety do theirs, under the name of Trevoux. If this be a rational opinion, I will become a trinitarian; for I begin to perceive a ſhade of meaning, in that myſtery, which Chriſtians have hitherto believed to be incomprehenſible.

What I have received of Mahomet appears to me to be *excellent* *. I cannot judge of the ſhell, till I ſee the whole body: but the verſification, in my opinion, is nervous, and interſperſed with portraits, and characters, which give ſucceſs to works of imagination.

You have no need, my dear Voltaire, of the eloquence of M. de Valori; for you are ſo circumſtanced, that your reputation can neither be diminiſhed nor increaſed.

* The Berlin edition, by ſome ſtrange miſtake, reads *recent*. T.

In

In vain would rancorous Envy foam and rage,
The foe of man, afflicted at his weal!
The reptile dates her birth on that bright day
When Fame firſt ſees the light; and oft, with touch
Impure, her venom ſheds o'er Hiſtory's page;
Nay tries to blaſt the laurels on your brow!
Your ſoul, in love with all the arts, has long
Well-earn'd renown by many a labour won.
Newton your guide, and Emily your friend,
Thuanus and great Maro you ſurpaſs.
How vaſt or oppoſite ſoe'er the theme,
Your ſun with equal ſplendor darts his rays.
More potent far that ſplendour is, with me,
Than is the miſty malice of your foes.

I am, with perfect eſteem,
My dear Voltaire,
Your very affectionate friend.

P. S. If you ſee the duke d'Aremberg, preſent my compliments, and tell him that two lines in French, under his hand, would give me more pleaſure than a thouſand German letters, in the true chancery ſtyle.

LETTER C.

From the Prince Royal.

From the Royal Stables of Pruſſia,
Auguſt 15, 1739.

AT length, moſt wiſely bidding pack
Off with the poiſon, and the quack,

Snares

Snares and aſſaſſins you eſcape,
And truſt the life-inſpiring grape.
For phyſic now Tokay you take,
And me henceforth your doctor make!
Agreed!—The weighty charge be mine:
My noſtrum is Hungarian wine.
Each other's doctor we're aſſign'd;
I for the body, you the mind.

I am glad to learn that the Hungarian wine is arrived at Bruſſels, and ſoon hope to hear you have drank of it, and that it has done you as much good as I expect. I am told you gave a charming banquet to the duke d'Aremberg, Madame Charolet, and the daughter of the Count de Laurai, of which I was glad; for it is good to prove, by example, to all Europe, that knowledge and gallantry are not incompatible.

Old dotards, long ſhut up in cell,
Whom words in lieu of wiſdom ſwell,
Remote from man, immur'd with books,
Betray that horror, in their looks,
In which they hold the merry race,
Who turn to farce their wiſe grimace.
Tho' they with virulence declaim
Of taſte, they ſcarcely know the name.
Exteriors all their cares engage;
They ſearch the gown, to find the ſage;
And deem a work or learn'd, or wiſe,
Not from its ſenſe, but from its ſize.
The vulgar herd, with error fraught,
From dawning infancy, are taught,

When

When cumb'rous word-monger's extoll'd,
Wiſdom's own image they behold!

That man might in its bleſſings ſhare,
Heav'n deign'd at length to form Voltaire!
In colouring, which more brightly glows,
Philoſophy once more aroſe!
Reſtor'd, ador'd, courageous, ſtrong,
Crowding admirers round her throng!
Depths into which, with ardent eye,
Newton alone was form'd to pry,
Tow'rd which the commentating race,
In vain, a gloomy path would trace,
Theſe thou haſt enter'd, what though rude,
And round them many a flow'r haſt ſtrew'd!

Ye doctors, who, from book to book,
Hunt Folly, with ſuch ſolemn look,
Behold, what though with glance uncouth,
How pleaſant is the road of truth!
Your gloomy, thorny, route forſake;
And condeſcend this road to take.

I wait with impatience for the following acts of Mahomet. I have no doubt of your ſucceſs, but am perſuaded this ſingular tragedy will ſhine forth, with new charms.

Thy conquering muſe her banners having borne
O'er half the world, would Aſia next adorn,
And ſubjugate; th' impoſtor's arts detect;
And paint the horrors of a bigot-ſect.
Bleſs'd be her progreſs! May her virtuous ſteel
The Zealot ſpare, but reach the heart of Zeal!

I had

I had been told that I ſhould find Machiavel defeated, in the political notes of Amelot de la Houſſaye; and in Gordon's tranſlation. Both theſe works, judicious and excellent in their kind, I have read; but have been pleaſed to ſee that my plan was of a very different nature. I ſhall endeavour to complete this plan, on my return; you ſhall be the firſt to ſee the work; nor ſhall it be ſeen, by the public, till approved by you. I have however been as induſtrious as travelling, the tribute which Birth, as it is ſaid, is obliged to pay to Indolence, and languor would permit me to be.

I ſhall be at Berlin on the 18th, and will then ſend you my preface to the Henriade, that it may obtain the ſeal of your approbation.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Be kind enough to preſent every aſſurance of eſteem to the marchioneſs du Chatelet and ſcold the duke d'Aremberg a little, for being ſo ſlow in his reply. I know not which of us is the moſt occupied, but I well know which is the moſt idle.

I am, with all poſſible affection, my dear Voltaire,

Your perfect friend.

END OF VOL. VI.